

PRESENTATIONS AND
RESOURCES ABOUT
SCIENTIFICALLY BASED READING RESEARCH

Grades K-3


The Reading Leadership
ACADEMY
GUIDEBOOK

READING FIRST AND EARLY READING FIRST
EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION
READING PROGRAMS
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT

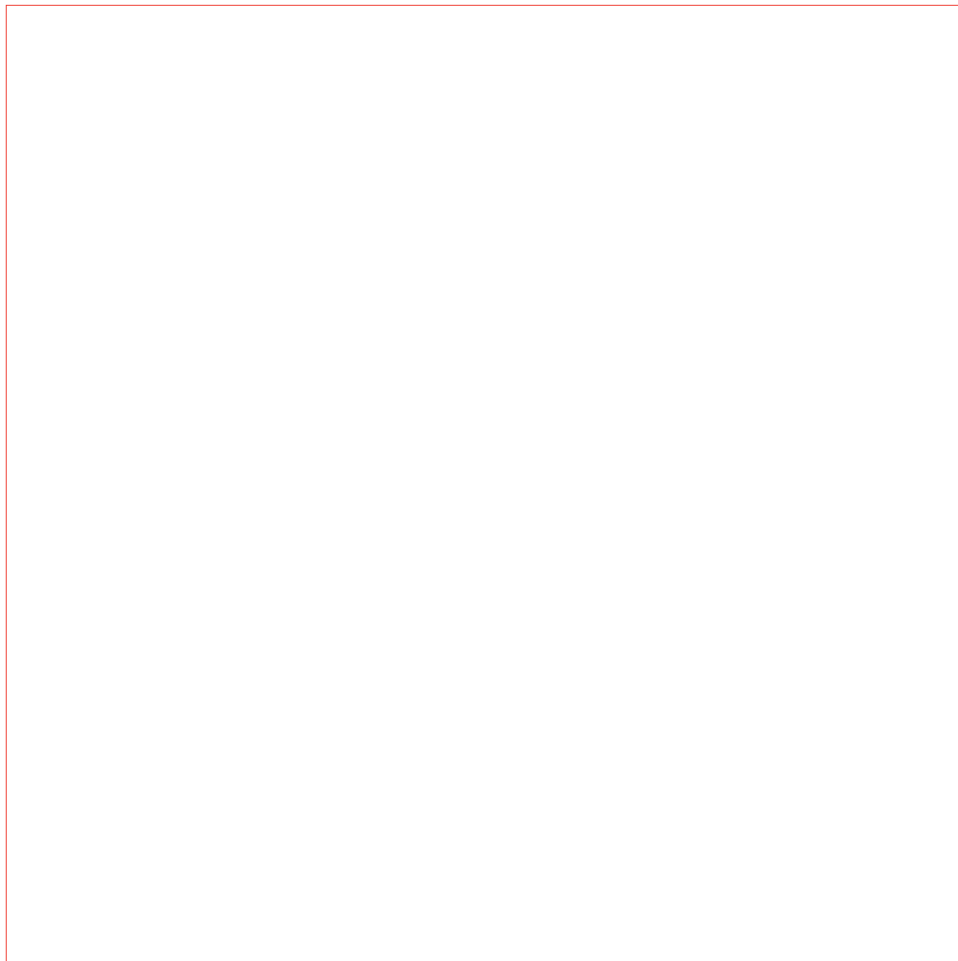


Based on materials developed for the Secretary's Reading Leadership Academies, January and February 2002

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and The Partnership for Reading



THE CONTENTS OF THIS GUIDEBOOK
ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ON A COMPACT DISC.
SEE THE POCKET BELOW.





WELCOME FROM THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Dear Colleague:

The U.S. Department of Education is engaged in the most ambitious campaign ever to improve the reading achievement of our children. With its intensive focus on effective instructional practice, Reading First intends that every American child will become a reader by the end of third grade.

The Department has designed Reading First with a philosophy firmly grounded in scientifically based research and a commitment to provide the necessary financial resources — \$6 billion in grants to states over six years — to achieve this goal. But financial support is only one strategy for success. The Department is also committed to providing the information and support necessary for states to know the research underpinnings of effective reading instruction and to integrate those concepts into curricular decisions, instructional methods, professional development, and performance assessments.

In January and February of 2002, Rod Paige, Secretary of Education, sponsored a series of Reading Leadership Academies in Washington, D.C. The academies produced a wealth of useful information and products representing the expertise of the best and brightest researchers in the field of reading instruction.

This publication, the Reading Leadership Academy Guidebook, collects the presentations and resources that formed the basis of the academies. This rich document offers tremendous opportunity for state administrators, superintendents, principals, and teachers to immerse themselves in the research findings of the past 20 years, research that has given us all clear direction on how reading instruction should be conceived and delivered.

We invite you to read the Guidebook as part of your own professional development and to share it with your colleagues. The CD that accompanies the Guidebook gives you the opportunity to use the actual academy presentations in workshops, district trainings, school team meetings, and other professional development events.

There is nothing more important in education today than improving the reading achievement for children, particularly those from low-income circumstances. I urge you to work with us to ensure that no child is left behind.

Susan B. Neuman
Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education

ACADEMY GUIDEBOOK

CONTENTS

AN OVERVIEW

READING FIRST AND EARLY READING FIRST

- Reading First Overview: A PowerPoint Presentation
- Reading First and Early Reading First Legislation
- Reading First: Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education
- Reading First: Frequently Asked Questions
- Early Reading First Overview: A PowerPoint Presentation
- Early Reading First Guidance and Eligibility

EFFECTIVE READING INSTRUCTION

- Effective Reading Instruction: A PowerPoint Presentation
- Quotes and Summaries from Resource Documents
- Key Terminology
- Effective Reading Instruction: Summary Checklist
- Effective Reading Instruction: References
- A Reading Research Sampler
- An Early Reading First Resource Sampler

READING PROGRAMS

- Reading Programs: A PowerPoint Presentation
- Textbook Evaluation and Adoption Practices: Introductory Paper
- A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program, Grades K-3
- References

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS

- Professional Development for Teachers: A PowerPoint Presentation
- A Blueprint for Professional Development for Teachers of Reading and Writing
- References

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

- Instructional Leadership: A PowerPoint Presentation

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT

- Accountability: A PowerPoint Presentation
- Assessment: A PowerPoint Presentation
- Action Plan for Implementing a District-wide Early Assessment System
- The Importance and Decision-making Utility of a Continuum of Fluency-based Indicators of Foundational Reading Skills for Third Grade High Stakes Outcomes: Introductory Paper

The Reading Leadership
ACADEMY
GUIDEBOOK

The Secretary's Reading Leadership Academies, held in Washington, D.C., in January and February of 2002, produced a wealth of materials designed to help states, districts, and schools improve reading achievement by implementing policies, programs, and practices rooted in scientifically based research.

This Guidebook collects the essential materials offered to more than 600 state-level administrators and policy makers at the academies. Reading researchers, program experts, federal program officials, and technical assistance providers pooled their knowledge, experience, and expertise to summarize those concepts from the reading research that suggest the most effective ways to develop, implement, and support a reading program from kindergarten through grade three.

The Guidebook follows the structure of the academies by presenting information on five key topics: effective reading instruction, reading programs, professional development for teachers, instructional leadership, and accountability and assessment. In addition, the Guidebook includes a chapter covering the basics of the Reading First and Early Reading First programs.

The core resources in these chapters are the PowerPoint presentations given at the academies, along with speaker notes. Other resources include lists of references, academic papers, consumer guides, and tools for implementation.

The U.S. Department of Education and the Partnership for Reading invite you to use this Guidebook as a tool for reviewing current reading programs, seeking out and selecting new programs, assessing student performance, and providing the support systems, such as professional development, that will sustain quality reading instruction.

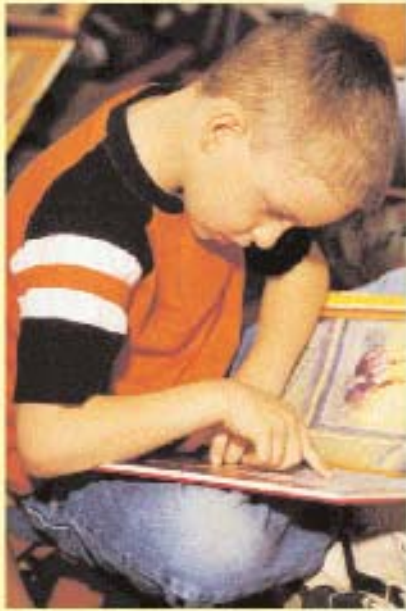
READING FIRST AND EARLY READING FIRST

READING FIRST AND EARLY READING FIRST ARE THE CORNERSTONE PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED BY THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001 THAT FOCUS ON QUALITY READING INSTRUCTION FROM KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE THREE (READING FIRST) AND PRE-SCHOOL (EARLY READING FIRST). BOTH PROGRAMS ARE BASED ON THE CONCEPTS THAT ALL BUT A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF CHILDREN CAN BE TAUGHT TO BE SUCCESSFUL READERS, PREVENTION OF READING PROBLEMS IS FAR MORE COST EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT THAN REMEDIATION, AND READING FAILURE CAN BE PREVENTED BY RELYING ON THE EXTENSIVE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH BASE IN READING.

THIS SECTION OF THE GUIDEBOOK INCLUDES:

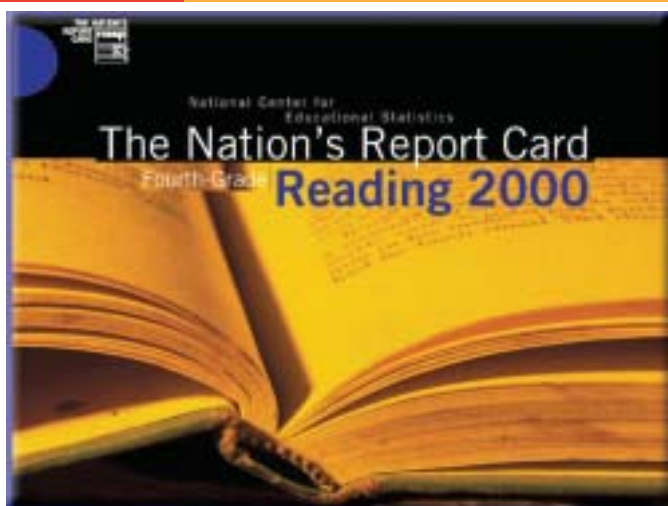
- A PowerPoint presentation on Reading First, covering its philosophical underpinnings, the rationale for basing reading instruction on scientific research, and program specifics such as timelines for grant proposal reviews and awards
- A copy of the section of the No Child Left Behind legislation that authorizes and describes Reading First and Early Reading First
- Guidance prepared by the U.S. Department of Education for states and territories preparing Reading First applications
- A summary of frequently asked questions about the Reading First program
- A PowerPoint presentation on Early Reading First, covering its philosophical underpinnings, the rationale for basing reading instruction on scientific research, and program specifics such as timelines for grant proposal reviews and awards
- Guidance prepared by the U.S. Department of Education for states and territories preparing Early Reading First applications, including eligibility standards

A POWERPOINT PRESENTATION ON READING FIRST

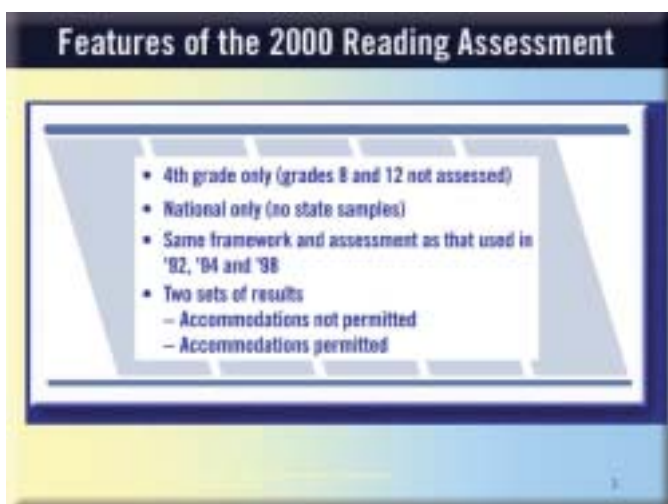


Reading First and Early Reading First

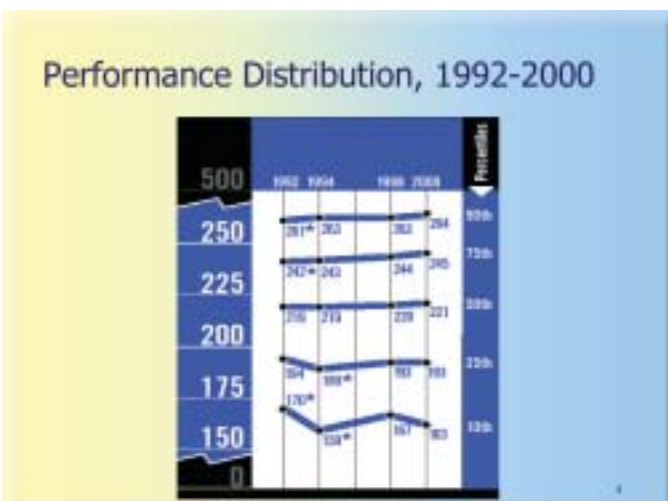
2



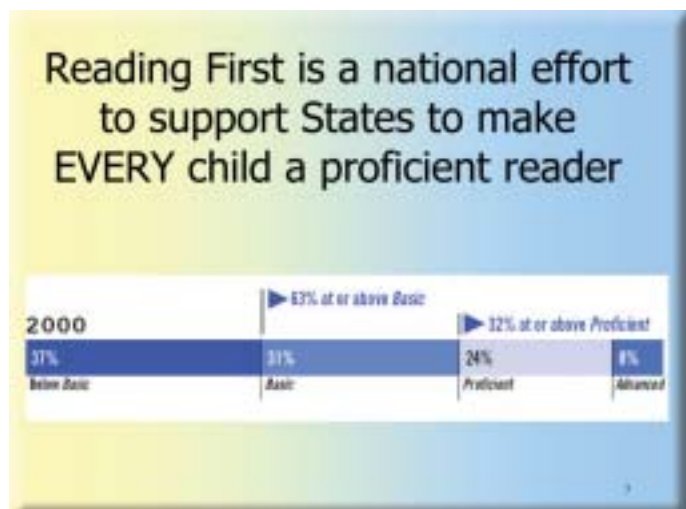
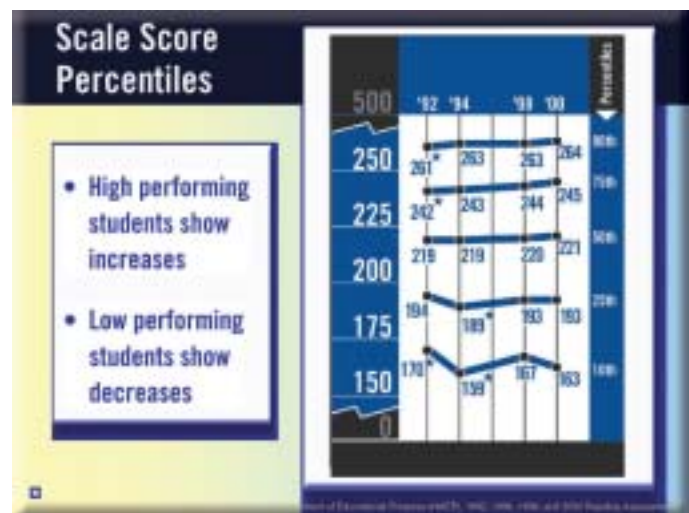
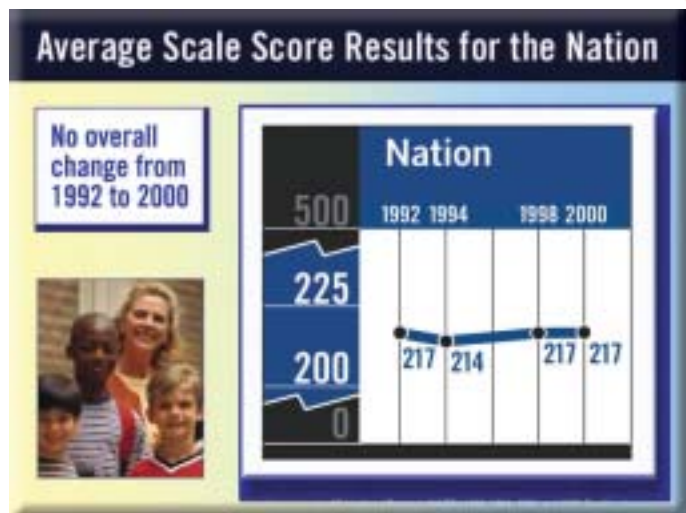
3

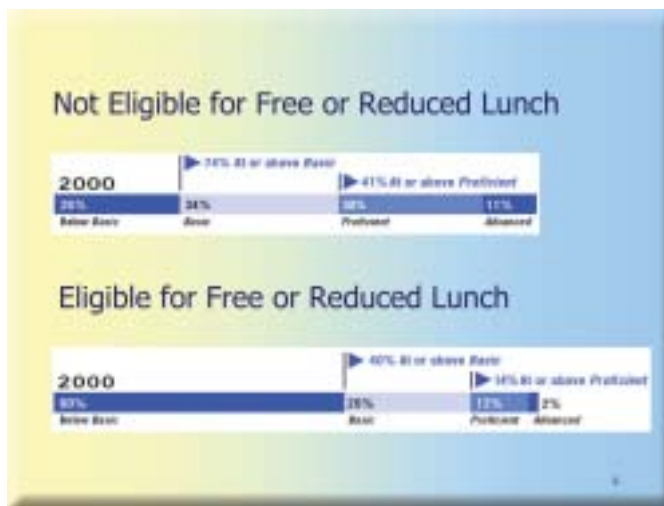


4



Reading First and Early Reading First





Significant New Reading Support

- Reading First
- Early Reading First
- Scientifically based reading instruction
- Valid & reliable assessments for
 - Screening
 - Diagnosis
 - Instruction
 - Evaluation
- \$900 million for FY2002
- \$1 billion (req.) for FY 2003
- 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, N. Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands, Bureau of Indian Affairs

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

Basic Premises of Reading First

- All but a very small number of children can be taught to be proficient readers
- Prevention of reading problems is far more cost effective and efficient than remediation
- Reading failure can be prevented by relying on the extensive scientific research base in reading

Why Scientifically Based Research?

Scientific Research...

- is not subject to fads and fashions
- makes teaching more effective, productive, and efficient
- can be better generalized and replicated across many sites

11

What Is Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR)?

SBRR is research that:

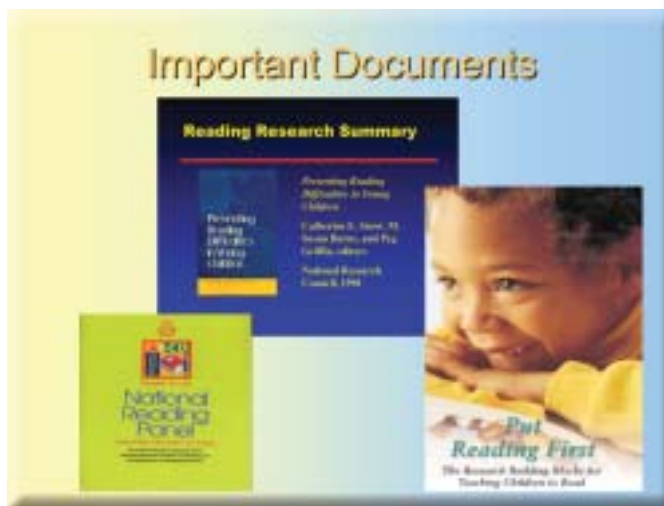
- applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties; and
- employs systematic empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;

12

SBRR is research that...

- relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
- has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review

13



What Works in Reading Instruction

Essential Components of K-3 Reading Instruction

Systematic and explicit instruction in:

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

ABCD

How will Reading First help schools and teachers produce successful readers?

- By focusing on high quality, comprehensive K-3 classroom reading instruction for all children
- By basing instructional decisions on what works
- By putting the solid research base about reading instruction into the hands of teachers

What Reading First Supports



- High-quality, relevant professional development
- Scientifically based instructional programs, materials and instruction
- Valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and ongoing classroom assessments
- State-wide accountability and leadership structures

How is Reading First Different?



- Much larger than previous efforts (\$900m vs. \$300m)
- More focused (one main venue, not several)
- Unprecedented funding and support for SEA-level activities (20% of total)

Reading First – New Support to/from SEAs

- An **unprecedented** 20% (vs. 5%, 3%, 1.5% in past) of total grant may be retained at SEA level, specifically for necessary support/capacity building
 - not more than 65% (of 20%) – professional development
 - not more than 25% (of 20%) – Technical Assistance for LEAs and schools
 - not more than 10% (of 20%) – planning and administration
- Support structures emanating from 20% can/shoudl be truly state-wide, supporting both Reading First K-3 classrooms and non-Reading First classrooms in SBRR practices
- Illustration, ex: State = size of Ohio, total award ~ \$27,000,000:
 - \$5,400,000 explicitly for SEA use:
 - \$3,510,000 for professional development
 - \$1,350,000 for TA for LEAs and schools
 - \$540,000 for planning and administration

Whom Reading First Targets Most

- Districts and schools with highest percentages or numbers of K-3 students reading below grade level
- Districts and schools with large numbers of poor children
- States have latitude to determine eligibility, but must strategically decide how funds will be awarded, ex:
 - Allocation each LEA is entitled to based on Title I share
 - Number of eligible schools within LEA
 - Of "sufficient size and scope to enable LEA to improve reading instruction..."



Follow-on Reading First Awards Based on Academic Progress

- Overall grant period is 6 years; mid-point at 3 years
- States and districts receiving grants will need to show K-3 reading progress to continue receiving Reading First awards
 - States: Annual reports, Progress reports (@midpoint)
 - Districts: As agreed with SEAs in competitive subgrant process
 - Non-performance will be penalized, success rewarded (continuation funding, targeted assistance grants)

21

How Will the Reading First Grant Program Work?



- States will submit applications to ED to be reviewed by an expert panel
- States will run grant competitions for eligible districts

22

Reading First Grant Program Projected Key Dates

On or about April 1, 2002 – Application package will be published in Federal Register and sent to all states

Panel Reviews

Applications received by May 1, 2002 reviewed by May 24, 2002
Applications received by May 15, 2002 reviewed by June 7, 2002
Applications received by May 29, 2002 reviewed by June 21, 2002
Applications received by June 12, 2002 reviewed by June 28, 2002
Applications received after June 12, 2002 reviewed on a rolling basis

May 29, 2002 – deadline to submit applications to receive funding on July 1, 2002

July 1, 2002 – funding awarded to States with approved applications. Awards made on a rolling basis thereafter.

23

Reading First Application

- SEA applications will contain no surprises or twists
 - Requirements flow directly from No Child Left Behind law
 - Understanding/implementation of content modules from this meeting form foundation of RF applications
- Additionally, SEA applications must also describe/explain:
 - Comprehensive Statewide RF implementation/mgmt plan, including but not limited to:
 - SEA monitoring structure(s), assessment tools, and consequences of inadequate LEA progress
 - SEA professional development capacity-building plans
 - Detailed description of how SEA will spend RF grant monies²⁴

Reading First Application – Major Elements

- Reading Leadership presentation topics from this meeting form content base of entire application
- Draft Reading First Guidance
 - Main Review Criteria will be outlined in Guidance
 - Format of final application appears within RF Guidance
- Frequently Asked Questions

25

Reading First Application – State Team Activities

- Framing Question after each presentation
- Work with other members of your own State team, wherever possible
- Start organizing / identifying needs as early as possible
- Again, there will be no surprises in RF application
 - No Child Left Behind Act (key elements founded on SBRR)
 - Academy Content
 - Main Review Criteria
 - Statewide Plan that brings it all together within each state's particular context

26

Reading First Application – State Team Activities

READING FIRST - ACCOUNTABILITY

State Team Accountability Activity

Framing Question: How can your State hold itself and LEAs accountable for the implementation of its Reading First program?

Current Strategies	State Context	Others in Context: Additional Information Needs/Questions	Strategies for Reading First Plan

27

Reading First Application – State Team Activities

READING FIRST OVERVIEW

State Team Overview Activity

Framing Question: How can Reading First help your State to improve student reading achievement?

Current Strategies	State Context	Others in Context: Additional Information Needs/Questions	Strategies for Reading First Plan

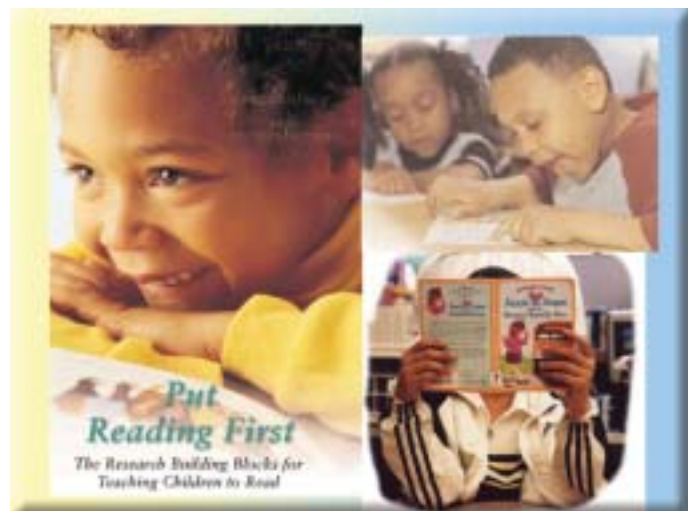
28

High Expectations for All

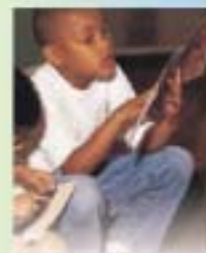
- Additional Federal support needs to be commensurate with goals of program, and it is...
- States and districts are expected to provide teachers the highest quality programs, instruction, professional development and support in reading, and they can...
- Teachers are expected to provide students comprehensive, skills-based, and effective reading instruction, and they can...

AND...

29



How will schools know if they have a strong program?



Every child will be reading!

31

Reading First will...

...create a message that we must change how we do reading instruction that will leave no child behind.



THE SECTION OF THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND
LEGISLATION THAT AUTHORIZES AND DESCRIBES
READING FIRST AND EARLY READING FIRST

Part B — Student Reading Skills Improvement Grants

Subpart 1 — Reading First

SEC. 1201. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this subpart are as follows:

- (1) To provide assistance to State educational agencies and local educational agencies in establishing reading programs for students in kindergarten through grade 3 that are based on scientifically based reading research, to ensure that every student can read at grade level or above not later than the end of grade 3.
- (2) To provide assistance to State educational agencies and local educational agencies in preparing teachers, including special education teachers, through professional development and other support, so the teachers can identify specific reading barriers facing their students and so the teachers have the tools to effectively help their students learn to read.
- (3) To provide assistance to State educational agencies and local educational agencies in selecting or administering screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments.
- (4) To provide assistance to State educational agencies and local educational agencies in selecting or developing effective instructional materials (including classroom-based materials to assist teachers in implementing the essential components of reading instruction), programs, learning systems, and strategies to implement methods that have been proven to prevent or remediate reading failure within a State.
- (5) To strengthen coordination among schools, early literacy programs, and family literacy programs to improve reading achievement for all children.

SEC. 1202. FORMULA GRANTS TO STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL-

- (1) **AUTHORIZATION TO MAKE GRANTS-** In the case of each State educational agency that in accordance with section 1203 submits to the Secretary an application for a 6-year period, the Secretary, from amounts appropriated under section 1002(b)(1) and subject to the application's approval, shall make a grant to the State educational agency for the uses specified in subsections (c) and (d). For each fiscal year, the funds provided under the grant shall equal the allotment determined for the State educational agency under subsection (b).
- (2) **DURATION OF GRANTS-** Subject to subsection (e)(3), a grant under this section shall be awarded for a period of not more than 6 years.

(b) DETERMINATION OF AMOUNT OF ALLOTMENTS-

- (1) **RESERVATIONS FROM APPROPRIATIONS-** From the total amount made available to carry out this subpart for a fiscal year, the Secretary —
 - (A) shall reserve one-half of 1 percent for allotments for the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to be distributed among these outlying areas on the basis of their relative need, as determined by the Secretary in accordance with the purposes of this subpart;
 - (B) shall reserve one-half of 1 percent for the Secretary of the Interior for programs under this subpart in schools operated or funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs;

(C) may reserve not more than 2 1/2 percent or \$25,000,000, whichever is less, to carry out section 1205 (relating to external evaluation) and section 1206 (relating to national activities);

(D) shall reserve \$5,000,000 to carry out sections 1207 and 1224 (relating to information dissemination); and

(E) for any fiscal year, beginning with fiscal year 2004, for which the amount appropriated to carry out this subpart exceeds the amount appropriated for fiscal year 2003, shall reserve, to carry out section 1204, the lesser of —

(i) \$90,000,000; or

(ii) 10 percent of such excess amount.

(2) STATE ALLOTMENTS- In accordance with paragraph (3), the Secretary shall allot among each of the States the total amount made available to carry out this subpart for any fiscal year and not reserved under paragraph (1).

(3) DETERMINATION OF STATE ALLOTMENT AMOUNTS-

(A) IN GENERAL- Subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall allot the amount made available under paragraph (2) for a fiscal year among the States in proportion to the number of children, aged 5 to 17, who reside within the State and are from families with incomes below the poverty line for the most recent fiscal year for which satisfactory data are available, compared to the number of such individuals who reside in all such States for that fiscal year.

(B) EXCEPTIONS-

(i) MINIMUM GRANT AMOUNT- Subject to clause (ii), no State receiving an allotment under subparagraph (A) may receive less than one-fourth of 1 percent of the total amount allotted under such subparagraph.

(ii) PUERTO RICO- The percentage of the amount allotted under subparagraph (A) that is allotted to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico for a fiscal year may not exceed the percentage that was received by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico of the funds allocated to all States under subpart 2 of part A for the preceding fiscal year.

(4) DISTRIBUTION OF SUBGRANTS - The Secretary may make a grant to a State educational agency only if the State educational agency agrees to expend at least 80 percent of the amount of the funds provided under the grant for the purpose of making, in accordance with subsection (c), competitive subgrants to eligible local educational agencies.

(5) REALLOTMENT- If a State educational agency described in paragraph (2) does not apply for an allotment under this section for any fiscal year, or if the State educational agency's application is not approved, the Secretary shall reallocate such amount to the remaining State educational agencies in accordance with paragraph (3).

(6) DEFINITION OF STATE- For purposes of this subsection, the term State' means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(c) SUBGRANTS TO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES-

(1) AUTHORIZATION TO MAKE SUBGRANTS - In accordance with paragraph (2), a State educational agency that receives a grant under this section shall make competitive subgrants to eligible local educational agencies.

(2) ALLOCATION-

(A) MINIMUM SUBGRANT AMOUNT- In making subgrants under paragraph (1), a State educational agency shall allocate to each eligible local educational agency that receives such a subgrant, at a minimum, an amount that bears the same relation to the funds made available under

subsection (b)(4) as the amount the eligible local educational agency received under part A for the preceding fiscal year bears to the amount all the local educational agencies in the State received under part A for the preceding fiscal year.

(B) PRIORITY - In making subgrants under paragraph (1), a State educational agency shall give priority to eligible local educational agencies in which at least —

- (i) 15 percent of the children served by the eligible local educational agency are from families with incomes below the poverty line; or
- (ii) 6,500 children served by the eligible local educational agency are from families with incomes below the poverty line.

(3) NOTICE - A State educational agency receiving a grant under this section shall provide notice to all eligible local educational agencies in the State of the availability of competitive subgrants under this subsection and of the requirements for applying for the subgrants.

(4) LOCAL APPLICATION- To be eligible to receive a subgrant under this subsection, an eligible local educational agency shall submit an application to the State educational agency at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the State educational agency may reasonably require.

(5) STATE REQUIREMENT- In distributing subgrant funds to eligible local educational agencies under this subsection, a State educational agency shall —

- (A) provide funds in sufficient size and scope to enable the eligible local educational agencies to improve reading instruction; and
- (B) provide the funds in amounts related to the number or percentage of students in kindergarten through grade 3 who are reading below grade level.

(6) LIMITATION TO CERTAIN SCHOOLS - In distributing subgrant funds under this subsection, an eligible local educational agency shall provide funds only to schools that both —

- (A) are among the schools served by that eligible local educational agency with the highest percentages or numbers of students in kindergarten through grade 3 reading below grade level, based on the most currently available data; and
- (B)(i) are identified for school improvement under section 1116(b); or
- (ii) have the highest percentages or numbers of children counted under section 1124(c).

(7) LOCAL USES OF FUNDS-

(A) REQUIRED USES- Subject to paragraph (8), an eligible local educational agency that receives a subgrant under this subsection shall use the funds provided under the subgrant to carry out the following activities:

- (i) Selecting and administering screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments.
- (ii) Selecting and implementing a learning system or program of reading instruction based on scientifically based reading research that —
 - (I) includes the essential components of reading instruction; and
 - (II) provides such instruction to the children in kindergarten through grade 3 in the schools served by the eligible local educational agency, including children who —

(aa) may have reading difficulties;

(bb) are at risk of being referred to special education based on these difficulties;

(cc) have been evaluated under section 614 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act but, in accordance with section 614(b)(5) of that Act, have not been identified as being a child with a disability (as defined in section 602 of that Act);

(dd) are being served under such Act primarily due to being identified as being a child with a specific learning disability (as defined in section 602 of that Act) related to reading;

(ee) are deficient in the essential components of reading skills, as listed in subparagraphs (A) through (E) of section 1208(3); or

(ff) are identified as having limited English proficiency.

(iii) Procuring and implementing instructional materials, including education technology such as software and other digital curricula, that are based on scientifically based reading research.

(iv) Providing professional development for teachers of kindergarten through grade 3, and special education teachers of kindergarten through grade 12, that —

(I) will prepare these teachers in all of the essential components of reading instruction;

(II) shall include —

(aa) information on instructional materials, programs, strategies, and approaches based on scientifically based reading research, including early intervention, classroom reading materials, and remedial programs and approaches; and

(bb) instruction in the use of screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments and other procedures that effectively identify students who may be at risk for reading failure or who are having difficulty reading;

(III) shall be provided by eligible professional development providers; and

(IV) will assist teachers in becoming highly qualified in reading instruction in accordance with the requirements of section 1119.

(v) Collecting and summarizing data —

(I) to document the effectiveness of activities carried out under this subpart in individual schools and in the local educational agency as a whole; and

(II) to stimulate and accelerate improvement by identifying the schools that produce significant gains in reading achievement.

(vi) Reporting data for all students and categories of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II).

(vii) Promoting reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading material, including coordination with programs funded through grants received under subpart 4, where applicable.

(B) ADDITIONAL USES- Subject to paragraph (8), an eligible local educational agency that receives a subgrant under this subsection may use the funds provided under the subgrant to carry out the following activities:

- (i) Humanities-based family literacy programs (which may be referred to as Prime Time Family Reading Time') that bond families around the acts of reading and using public libraries.
- (ii) Providing training in the essential components of reading instruction to a parent or other individual who volunteers to be a student's reading tutor, to enable such parent or individual to support instructional practices that are based on scientifically based reading research and are being used by the student's teacher.
- (iii) Assisting parents, through the use of materials and reading programs, strategies, and approaches (including family literacy services) that are based on scientifically based reading research, to encourage reading and support their child's reading development.

(8) LOCAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION- An eligible local educational agency that receives a subgrant under this subsection may use not more than 3.5 percent of the funds provided under the subgrant for planning and administration.

(d) STATE USES OF FUNDS-

(1) IN GENERAL- A State educational agency that receives a grant under this section may expend not more than a total of 20 percent of the grant funds to carry out the activities described in paragraphs (3), (4), and (5).

(2) PRIORITY- A State educational agency shall give priority to carrying out the activities described in paragraphs (3), (4), and (5) for schools described in subsection (c)(6).

(3) PROFESSIONAL INSERVICE AND PRESERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW- A State educational agency may expend not more than 65 percent of the amount of the funds made available under paragraph (1) —

(A) to develop and implement a program of professional development for teachers, including special education teachers, of kindergarten through grade 3 that —

- (i) will prepare these teachers in all the essential components of reading instruction;
- (ii) shall include —
 - (I) information on instructional materials, programs, strategies, and approaches based on scientifically based reading research, including early intervention and reading remediation materials, programs, and approaches; and
 - (II) instruction in the use of screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments and other scientifically based procedures that effectively identify students who may be at risk for reading failure or who are having difficulty reading; and

(iii) shall be provided by eligible professional development providers;

(B) to strengthen and enhance preservice courses for students preparing, at all public institutions of higher education in the State, to teach kindergarten through grade 3 by —

- (i) reviewing such courses to determine whether the courses' content is consistent with the findings of the most current scientifically based reading research, including findings on the essential components of reading instruction;

(ii) following up such reviews with recommendations to ensure that such institutions offer courses that meet the highest standards; and

(iii) preparing a report on the results of such reviews, submitting the report to the reading and literacy partnership for the State established under section 1203(d), and making the report available for public review by means of the Internet; and

(C) to make recommendations on how the State licensure and certification standards in the area of reading might be improved.

(4) **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES AND SCHOOLS** - A State educational agency may expend not more than 25 percent of the amount of the funds made available under paragraph (1) for one or more of the following:

(A) Assisting local educational agencies in accomplishing the tasks required to design and implement a program under this subpart, including —

(i) selecting and implementing a program or programs of reading instruction based on scientifically based reading research;

(ii) selecting screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments; and

(iii) identifying eligible professional development providers to help prepare reading teachers to teach students using the programs and assessments described in clauses (i) and (ii).

(B) Providing expanded opportunities to students in kindergarten through grade 3 who are served by eligible local educational agencies for receiving reading assistance from alternative providers that includes —

(i) screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments; and

(ii) as need is indicated by the assessments under clause (i), instruction based on scientifically based reading research that includes the essential components of reading instruction.

(5) **PLANNING, ADMINISTRATION, AND REPORTING-**

(A) **EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS** - A State educational agency may expend not more than 10 percent of the amount of funds made available under paragraph (1) for the activities described in this paragraph.

(B) **PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION** - A State educational agency that receives a grant under this section may expend funds made available under subparagraph (A) for planning and administration relating to the State uses of funds authorized under this subpart, including the following:

(i) Administering the distribution of competitive subgrants to eligible local educational agencies under subsection (c) and section 1204(d).

(ii) Assessing and evaluating, on a regular basis, eligible local educational agency activities assisted under this subpart, with respect to whether they have been effective in increasing the number of children in grades 1, 2, and 3 served under this subpart who can read at or above grade level.

(C) **ANNUAL REPORTING-**

(i) **IN GENERAL** - A State educational agency that receives a grant under this section shall expend funds made available under subparagraph (A) to provide the Secretary annually with a report on the implementation of this subpart.

(ii) **INFORMATION INCLUDED** - Each report under this subparagraph shall include information on the following:

(I) Evidence that the State educational agency is fulfilling

its obligations under this subpart.

(II) Specific identification of those schools and local educational agencies that report the largest gains in reading achievement.

(III) The progress the State educational agency and local educational agencies within the State are making in reducing the number of students served under this subpart in grades 1, 2, and 3 who are reading below grade level, as demonstrated by such information as teacher reports and school evaluations of mastery of the essential components of reading instruction.

(IV) Evidence on whether the State educational agency and local educational agencies within the State have significantly increased the number of students reading at grade level or above, significantly increased the percentages of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) who are reading at grade level or above, and successfully implemented this subpart.

(iii) **PRIVACY PROTECTION-** Data in the report shall be reported in a manner that protects the privacy of individuals.

(iv) **CONTRACT-** To the extent practicable, a State educational agency shall enter into a contract with an entity that conducts scientifically based reading research, under which contract the entity will assist the State educational agency in producing the reports required to be submitted under this subparagraph.

(e) **REVIEW-**

(1) **PROGRESS REPORT-**

(A) **SUBMISSION-** Not later than 60 days after the termination of the third year of the grant period, each State educational agency receiving a grant under this section shall submit a progress report to the Secretary.

(B) **INFORMATION INCLUDED-** The progress report shall include information on the progress the State educational agency and local educational agencies within the State are making in reducing the number of students served under this subpart in grades 1, 2, and 3 who are reading below grade level (as demonstrated by such information as teacher reports and school evaluations of mastery of the essential components of reading instruction). The report shall also include evidence from the State educational agency and local educational agencies within the State that the State educational agency and the local educational agencies have significantly increased the number of students reading at grade level or above, significantly increased the percentages of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) who are reading at grade level or above, and successfully implemented this subpart.

(2) **PEER REVIEW-** The progress report described in paragraph (1) shall be reviewed by the peer review panel convened under section 1203(c)(2).

(3) **CONSEQUENCES OF INSUFFICIENT PROGRESS-** After submission of the progress report described in paragraph (1), if the Secretary determines that the State educational agency is not making significant progress in meeting the purposes of this subpart, the Secretary may withhold from the State educational agency, in whole or in part, further payments under this section in accordance with section 455 of the General Education Provisions Act or take such other action authorized by law as the Secretary determines necessary, including providing technical assistance upon request of the State educational agency.

(f) **FUNDS NOT USED FOR STATE LEVEL ACTIVITIES-** Any portion of funds described in subsection (d)(1) that a State educational agency does not expend in accordance with

subsection (d)(1) shall be expended for the purpose of making subgrants in accordance with subsection (c).

SEC. 1203. STATE FORMULA GRANT APPLICATIONS.

(a) APPLICATIONS -

(1) **IN GENERAL-** A State educational agency that desires to receive a grant under section 1202 shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time and in such form as the Secretary may require. The application shall contain the information described in subsection (b).

(2) **SPECIAL APPLICATION PROVISIONS-** For those State educational agencies that have received a grant under part C of title II (as such part was in effect on the day before the date of enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001), the Secretary shall establish a modified set of requirements for an application under this section that takes into account the information already submitted and approved under that program and minimizes the duplication of effort on the part of such State educational agencies.

(b) CONTENTS- An application under this section shall contain the following:

(1) An assurance that the Governor of the State, in consultation with the State educational agency, has established a reading and literacy partnership described in subsection (d), and a description of how such partnership —

(A) coordinated the development of the application; and

(B) will assist in the oversight and evaluation of the State educational agency's activities under this subpart.

(2) A description, if applicable, of the State's strategy to expand, continue, or modify activities authorized under part C of title II (as such part was in effect on the day before the date of enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001).

(3) An assurance that the State educational agency, and any local educational agencies receiving a subgrant from that State educational agency under section 1202, will, if requested, participate in the external evaluation under section 1205.

(4) A State educational agency plan containing a description of the following:

(A) How the State educational agency will assist local educational agencies in identifying screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments.

(B) How the State educational agency will assist local educational agencies in identifying instructional materials, programs, strategies, and approaches, based on scientifically based reading research, including early intervention and reading remediation materials, programs, and approaches.

(C) How the State educational agency will ensure that professional development activities related to reading instruction and provided under section 1202 are —

(i) coordinated with other Federal, State, and local level funds, and used effectively to improve instructional practices for reading; and

(ii) based on scientifically based reading research.

(D) How the activities assisted under section 1202 will address the needs of teachers and other instructional staff in implementing the essential components of reading instruction.

(E) How subgrants made by the State educational agency under section 1202 will meet the requirements of section 1202, including how the State educational agency will ensure that eligible local educational agencies receiving subgrants under section 1202 will use practices based on scientifically based reading research.

(F) How the State educational agency will, to the extent practicable, make

grants to eligible local educational agencies in both rural and urban areas.

(G) How the State educational agency will build on, and promote coordination among literacy programs in the State (including federally funded programs such as programs under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and subpart 2), to increase the effectiveness of the programs in improving reading for adults and children and to avoid duplication of the efforts of the program.

(H) How the State educational agency will assess and evaluate, on a regular basis, eligible local educational agency activities assisted under section 1202, with respect to whether the activities have been effective in achieving the purposes of section 1202.

(I) Any other information that the Secretary may reasonably require.

(c) APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS-

(1) IN GENERAL- The Secretary shall approve an application of a State educational agency under this section only if such application meets the requirements of this section.

(2) PEER REVIEW-

(A) IN GENERAL- The Secretary, in consultation with the National Institute for Literacy, shall convene a panel to evaluate applications under this section. At a minimum, the panel shall include —

- (i) three individuals selected by the Secretary;
- (ii) three individuals selected by the National Institute for Literacy;
- (iii) three individuals selected by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences; and
- (iv) three individuals selected by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

(B) EXPERTS- The panel shall include —

- (i) experts who are competent, by virtue of their training, expertise, or experience, to evaluate applications under this section;
- (ii) experts who provide professional development to individuals who teach reading to children and adults based on scientifically based reading research;
- (iii) experts who provide professional development to other instructional staff based on scientifically based reading research; and
- (iv) an individual who has expertise in screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments.

(C) RECOMMENDATIONS- The panel shall recommend grant applications from State educational agencies under this section to the Secretary for funding or for disapproval.

(d) READING AND LITERACY PARTNERSHIPS-

(1) IN GENERAL- For a State educational agency to receive a grant under section 1202, the Governor of the State, in consultation with the State educational agency, shall establish a reading and literacy partnership.

(2) REQUIRED PARTICIPANTS- The reading and literacy partnership shall include the following participants:

- (A) The Governor of the State.
- (B) The chief State school officer.
- (C) The chairman and the ranking member of each committee of the State legislature that is responsible for education policy.
- (D) A representative, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer, of at least one eligible local educational agency.
- (E) A representative, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State

school officer, of a community-based organization working with children to improve their reading skills, particularly a community-based organization using tutors and scientifically based reading research.

(F) State directors of appropriate Federal or State programs with a strong reading component, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer.

(G) A parent of a public or private school student or a parent who educates the parent's child in the parent's home, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer.

(H) A teacher, who may be a special education teacher, who successfully teaches reading, and another instructional staff member, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer.

(I) A family literacy service provider selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer.

(3) **OPTIONAL PARTICIPANTS** - The reading and literacy partnership may include additional participants, who shall be selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer, and who may include a representative of —

(A) an institution of higher education operating a program of teacher preparation in the State that is based on scientifically based reading research;

(B) a local educational agency;

(C) a private nonprofit or for-profit eligible professional development provider providing instruction based on scientifically based reading research;

(D) an adult education provider;

(E) a volunteer organization that is involved in reading programs; or

(F) a school library or a public library that offers reading or literacy programs for children or families.

(4) **PREEXISTING PARTNERSHIP** - If, before the date of enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, a State educational agency established a consortium, partnership, or any other similar body that was considered a reading and literacy partnership for purposes of part C of title II of this Act (as such part was in effect on the day before the date of enactment of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001), that consortium, partnership, or body may be considered a reading and literacy partnership for purposes of this subsection consistent with the provisions of this subpart.

SEC. 1204. TARGETED ASSISTANCE GRANTS.

(a) **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR AWARDING TARGETED ASSISTANCE GRANTS TO STATES**- Beginning with fiscal year 2004, from funds appropriated under section 1202(b)(1)(E), the Secretary shall make grants, on a competitive basis, to those State educational agencies that —

(1) for each of 2 consecutive years, demonstrate that an increasing percentage of third graders in each of the groups described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) in the schools served by the local educational agencies receiving funds under section 1202 are reaching the proficient level in reading; and

(2) for each of the same such consecutive 2 years, demonstrate that schools receiving funds under section 1202 are improving the reading skills of students in grades 1, 2, and 3 based on screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments.

(b) **CONTINUATION OF PERFORMANCE AWARDS**- For any State educational agency that receives a competitive grant under this section, the Secretary shall make an award for each of the succeeding years that the State educational agency demonstrates it is continuing to meet the criteria described in subsection (a).

(c) DISTRIBUTION OF TARGETED ASSISTANCE GRANTS -

(1) IN GENERAL- The Secretary shall make a grant to each State educational agency with an application approved under this section in an amount that bears the same relation to the amount made available to carry out this section for a fiscal year as the number of children counted under section 1124(c) for the State bears to the number of such children so counted for all States with applications approved for that year.

(2) PEER REVIEW- The peer review panel convened under section 1203(c)(2) shall review the applications submitted under this subsection. The panel shall recommend such applications to the Secretary for funding or for disapproval.

(3) APPLICATION CONTENTS - A State educational agency that desires to receive a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require. Each such application shall include the following:

(A) Evidence that the State educational agency has carried out its obligations under section 1203.

(B) Evidence that the State educational agency has met the criteria described in subsection (a).

(C) The amount of funds requested by the State educational agency and a description of the criteria the State educational agency intends to use in distributing subgrants to eligible local educational agencies under this section to continue or expand activities under subsection (d)(5).

(D) Evidence that the State educational agency has increased significantly the percentage of students reading at grade level or above.

(E) Any additional evidence that demonstrates success in the implementation of this section.

(d) SUBGRANTS TO ELIGIBLE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES-

(1) IN GENERAL- The Secretary may make a grant to a State educational agency under this section only if the State educational agency agrees to expend 100 percent of the amount of the funds provided under the grant for the purpose of making competitive subgrants in accordance with this subsection to eligible local educational agencies.

(2) NOTICE- A State educational agency receiving a grant under this section shall provide notice to all local educational agencies in the State of the availability of competitive subgrants under this subsection and of the requirements for applying for the subgrants.

(3) APPLICATION- To be eligible to receive a subgrant under this subsection, an eligible local educational agency shall submit an application to the State educational agency at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the State educational agency may reasonably require.

(4) DISTRIBUTION-

(A) IN GENERAL- A State educational agency shall distribute subgrants under this section through a competitive process based on relative need of eligible local educational agencies and the evidence described in this paragraph.

(B) EVIDENCE USED IN ALL YEARS- For all fiscal years, a State educational agency shall distribute subgrants under this section based on evidence that an eligible local educational agency —

(i) satisfies the requirements of section 1202(c)(4);

(ii) will carry out its obligations under this subpart;

(iii) will work with other local educational agencies in the State that have not received a subgrant under this subsection to assist such nonreceiving agencies in increasing the reading achievement of students; and

(iv) is meeting the criteria described in subsection (a).

(5) LOCAL USES OF FUNDS- An eligible local educational agency that receives a subgrant under this subsection —

(A) shall use the funds provided under the subgrant to carry out the activities described in section 1202(c)(7)(A); and

(B) may use such funds to carry out the activities described in section 1202(c)(7)(B).

SEC. 1205. EXTERNAL EVALUATION.

(a) IN GENERAL- From funds reserved under section 1202(b)(1)(C), the Secretary shall contract with an independent organization outside of the Department for a 5-year, rigorous, scientifically valid, quantitative evaluation of this subpart.

(b) PROCESS- The evaluation under subsection (a) shall be conducted by an organization that is capable of designing and carrying out an independent evaluation that identifies the effects of specific activities carried out by State educational agencies and local educational agencies under this subpart on improving reading instruction. Such evaluation shall take into account factors influencing student performance that are not controlled by teachers or education administrators.

(c) ANALYSIS- The evaluation under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An analysis of the relationship between each of the essential components of reading instruction and overall reading proficiency.

(2) An analysis of whether assessment tools used by State educational agencies and local educational agencies measure the essential components of reading.

(3) An analysis of how State reading standards correlate with the essential components of reading instruction.

(4) An analysis of whether the receipt of a targeted assistance grant under section 1204 results in an increase in the number of children who read proficiently.

(5) A measurement of the extent to which specific instructional materials improve reading proficiency.

(6) A measurement of the extent to which specific screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments assist teachers in identifying specific reading deficiencies.

(7) A measurement of the extent to which professional development programs implemented by State educational agencies using funds received under this subpart improve reading instruction.

(8) A measurement of how well students preparing to enter the teaching profession are prepared to teach the essential components of reading instruction.

(9) An analysis of changes in students' interest in reading and time spent reading outside of school.

(10) Any other analysis or measurement pertinent to this subpart that is determined to be appropriate by the Secretary.

(d) PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT- The findings of the evaluation conducted under this section shall be provided to State educational agencies and local educational agencies on a periodic basis for use in program improvement.

SEC. 1206. NATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

From funds reserved under section 1202(b)(1)(C), the Secretary —

(1) may provide technical assistance in achieving the purposes of this subpart to State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools requesting such assistance;

(2) shall, at a minimum, evaluate the impact of services provided to children under this subpart with respect to their referral to, and eligibility for, special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (based on their

difficulties learning to read); and
(3) shall carry out the external evaluation as described in section 1205.

SEC. 1207. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION.

(a) IN GENERAL- From funds reserved under section 1202(b)(1)(D), the National Institute for Literacy, in collaboration with the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Director of the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development shall —

- (1) disseminate information on scientifically based reading research pertaining to children, youth, and adults;
- (2) identify and disseminate information about schools, local educational agencies, and State educational agencies that have effectively developed and implemented classroom reading programs that meet the requirements of this subpart, including those State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools that have been identified as effective through the evaluation and peer review provisions of this subpart; and
- (3) support the continued identification and dissemination of information on reading programs that contain the essential components of reading instruction as supported by scientifically based reading research, that can lead to improved reading outcomes for children, youth, and adults.

(b) DISSEMINATION AND COORDINATION- At a minimum, the National Institute for Literacy shall disseminate the information described in subsection (a) to —

- (1) recipients of Federal financial assistance under this title, title III, the Head Start Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act; and
- (2) each Bureau funded school (as defined in section 1141 of the Education Amendments of 1978).

(c) USE OF EXISTING NETWORKS- In carrying out this section, the National Institute for Literacy shall, to the extent practicable, use existing information and dissemination networks developed and maintained through other public and private entities including through the Department and the National Center for Family Literacy.

(d) NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY - For purposes of funds reserved under section 1202(b)(1)(D) to carry out this section, the National Institute for Literacy shall administer such funds in accordance with section 242(b) of Public Law 105-220 (relating to the establishment and administration of the National Institute for Literacy).

SEC. 1208. DEFINITIONS.

In this subpart:

(1) ELIGIBLE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY- The term eligible local educational agency' means a local educational agency that —

(A) is among the local educational agencies in the State with the highest numbers or percentages of students in kindergarten through grade 3 reading below grade level, based on the most currently available data; and

(B) has —

(i) jurisdiction over a geographic area that includes an area designated as an empowerment zone, or an enterprise community, under part I of subchapter U of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(ii) jurisdiction over a significant number or percentage of schools that are identified for school improvement under section 1116(b); or

(iii) the highest numbers or percentages of children who are counted under section 1124(c), in comparison to other local educational agencies in the State.

(2) **ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDER**- The term eligible professional development provider' means a provider of professional development in reading instruction to teachers, including special education teachers, that is based on scientifically based reading research.

(3) **ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF READING INSTRUCTION**- The term essential components of reading instruction' means explicit and systematic instruction in —

- (A) phonemic awareness;
- (B) phonics;
- (C) vocabulary development;
- (D) reading fluency, including oral reading skills; and
- (E) reading comprehension strategies.

(4) **INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF**- The term instructional staff' —

- (A) means individuals who have responsibility for teaching children to read; and
- (B) includes principals, teachers, supervisors of instruction, librarians, library school media specialists, teachers of academic subjects other than reading, and other individuals who have responsibility for assisting children to learn to read.

(5) **READING**- The term reading' means a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires all of the following:

- (A) The skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print.
- (B) The ability to decode unfamiliar words.
- (C) The ability to read fluently.
- (D) Sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension.
- (E) The development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print.
- (F) The development and maintenance of a motivation to read.

(6) **SCIENTIFICALLY BASED READING RESEARCH**- The term scientifically based reading research' means research that —

- (A) applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties; and
- (B) includes research that —
 - (i) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
 - (ii) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
 - (iii) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
 - (iv) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

(7) **SCREENING, DIAGNOSTIC, AND CLASSROOM-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL READING ASSESSMENTS**-

(A) **IN GENERAL**- The term screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments' means —

- (i) screening reading assessments;
- (ii) diagnostic reading assessments; and

(iii) classroom-based instructional reading assessments.

(B) SCREENING READING ASSESSMENT- The term screening reading assessment' means an assessment that is —

(i) valid, reliable, and based on scientifically based reading research; and

(ii) a brief procedure designed as a first step in identifying children who may be at high risk for delayed development or academic failure and in need of further diagnosis of their need for special services or additional reading instruction.

(C) DIAGNOSTIC READING ASSESSMENT- The term diagnostic reading assessment' means an assessment that is —

(i) valid, reliable, and based on scientifically based reading research; and

(ii) used for the purpose of —

(I) identifying a child's specific areas of strengths and weaknesses so that the child has learned to read by the end of grade 3;

(II) determining any difficulties that a child may have in learning to read and the potential cause of such difficulties; and

(III) helping to determine possible reading intervention strategies and related special needs.

(D) CLASSROOM-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL READING ASSESSMENT- The term classroom-based instructional reading assessment' means an assessment that —

(i) evaluates children's learning based on systematic observations by teachers of children performing academic tasks that are part of their daily classroom experience; and

(ii) is used to improve instruction in reading, including classroom instruction.

Subpart 2 — Early Reading First

SEC. 1221. PURPOSES; DEFINITIONS.

(a) PURPOSES- The purposes of this subpart are as follows:

- (1) To support local efforts to enhance the early language, literacy, and prereading development of preschool age children, particularly those from low-income families, through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research.
- (2) To provide preschool age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and literature-rich environments, so that the children can attain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond.
- (3) To demonstrate language and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research that supports the age-appropriate development of —
 - (A) recognition, leading to automatic recognition, of letters of the alphabet;
 - (B) knowledge of letter sounds, the blending of sounds, and the use of increasingly complex vocabulary;
 - (C) an understanding that written language is composed of phonemes and letters each representing one or more speech sounds that in combination make up syllables, words, and sentences;
 - (D) spoken language, including vocabulary and oral comprehension abilities; and
 - (E) knowledge of the purposes and conventions of print.
- (4) To use screening assessments to effectively identify preschool age children who may be at risk for reading failure.
- (5) To integrate such scientific reading research-based instructional materials and literacy activities with existing programs of preschools, child care agencies and programs, Head Start centers, and family literacy services.

(b) DEFINITIONS- For purposes of this subpart:

- (1) ELIGIBLE APPLICANT- The term eligible applicant' means —
 - (A) one or more local educational agencies that are eligible to receive a subgrant under subpart 1;
 - (B) one or more public or private organizations or agencies, acting on behalf of one or more programs that serve preschool age children (such as a program at a Head Start center, a child care program, or a family literacy

program), which organizations or agencies shall be located in a community served by a local educational agency described in subparagraph (A); or

(C) one or more local educational agencies described in subparagraph (A) in collaboration with one or more organizations or agencies described in subparagraph (B).

(2) **SCIENTIFICALLY BASED READING RESEARCH-** The term scientifically based reading research' has the same meaning given to that term in section 1208.

(3) **SCREENING READING ASSESSMENT-** The term screening reading assessment' has the same meaning given to that term in section 1208.

SEC. 1222. LOCAL EARLY READING FIRST GRANTS.

(a) **PROGRAM AUTHORIZED-** From amounts appropriated under section 1002(b)(2), the Secretary shall award grants, on a competitive basis, for periods of not more than 6 years, to eligible applicants to enable the eligible applicants to carry out the authorized activities described in subsection (d).

(b) **APPLICATIONS-** An eligible applicant that desires to receive a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary, which shall include a description of —

(1) the programs to be served by the proposed project, including demographic and socioeconomic information on the preschool age children enrolled in the programs;

(2) how the proposed project will enhance the school readiness of preschool age children in high-quality oral language and literature-rich environments;

(3) how the proposed project will prepare and provide ongoing assistance to staff in the programs, through professional development and other support, to provide high-quality language, literacy, and prereading activities using scientifically based reading research, for preschool age children;

(4) how the proposed project will provide services and use instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research on early language acquisition, prereading activities, and the development of spoken vocabulary skills;

(5) how the proposed project will help staff in the programs to meet more effectively the diverse needs of preschool age children in the community, including such children with limited English proficiency, disabilities, or other special needs;

(6) how the proposed project will integrate such instructional materials and literacy activities with existing preschool programs and family literacy services;

(7) how the proposed project will help children, particularly children experiencing difficulty with spoken language, prereading, and early reading skills, to make the transition from preschool to formal classroom

instruction in school;

(8) if the eligible applicant has received a subgrant under subpart 1, how the activities conducted under this subpart will be coordinated with the eligible applicant's activities under subpart 1 at the kindergarten through grade 3 level;

(9) how the proposed project will evaluate the success of the activities supported under this subpart in enhancing the early language, literacy, and prereading development of preschool age children served by the project; and

(10) such other information as the Secretary may require.

(c) **APPROVAL OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS-** The Secretary shall select applicants for funding under this subpart based on the quality of the applications and the recommendations of a peer review panel convened under section 1203(c)(2), that includes, at a minimum, three individuals, selected from the entities described in clauses (ii), (iii), and (iv) of section 1203(c)(2)(A), who are experts in early reading development and early childhood development.

(d) **AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES-** An eligible applicant that receives a grant under this subpart shall use the funds provided under the grant to carry out the following activities:

(1) Providing preschool age children with high-quality oral language and literature-rich environments in which to acquire language and prereading skills.

(2) Providing professional development that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of early language and reading development for the staff of the eligible applicant and that will assist in developing the preschool age children's —

(A) recognition, leading to automatic recognition, of letters of the alphabet, knowledge of letters, sounds, blending of letter sounds, and increasingly complex vocabulary;

(B) understanding that written language is composed of phonemes and letters each representing one or more speech sounds that in combination make up syllables, words, and sentences;

(C) spoken language, including vocabulary and oral comprehension abilities; and

(D) knowledge of the purposes and conventions of print.

(3) Identifying and providing activities and instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing the skills and abilities described in paragraph (2).

(4) Acquiring, providing training for, and implementing screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures that are based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool age children are developing the skills described in this subsection.

(5) Integrating such instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures into the programs offered by the eligible applicant.

(e) AWARD AMOUNTS- The Secretary may establish a maximum award amount, or ranges of award amounts, for grants under this subpart.

SEC. 1223. FEDERAL ADMINISTRATION.

The Secretary shall consult with the Secretary of Health and Human Services to coordinate the activities under this subpart with preschool age programs administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

SEC. 1224. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION.

From the funds the National Institute for Literacy receives under section 1202(b)(1)(D), the National Institute for Literacy, in consultation with the Secretary, shall disseminate information regarding projects assisted under this subpart that have proven effective.

SEC. 1225. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

Each eligible applicant receiving a grant under this subpart shall report annually to the Secretary regarding the eligible applicant's progress in addressing the purposes of this subpart. Such report shall include, at a minimum, a description of —

- (1) the research-based instruction, materials, and activities being used in the programs funded under the grant;
- (2) the types of programs funded under the grant and the ages of children served by such programs;
- (3) the qualifications of the program staff who provide early literacy instruction under such programs and the type of ongoing professional development provided to such staff; and
- (4) the results of the evaluation described in section 1222(b)(9).

SEC. 1226. EVALUATION.

(a) IN GENERAL- From the total amount made available under section 1002(b)(2) for the period beginning October 1, 2002, and ending September 30, 2006, the Secretary shall reserve not more than \$3,000,000 to conduct an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of this subpart.

(b) REPORTS-

- (1) INTERIM REPORT- Not later than October 1, 2004, the Secretary shall submit an interim report to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

(2) FINAL REPORT- Not later than September 30, 2006, the Secretary shall submit a final report to the committees described in paragraph (1).

(c) CONTENTS- The reports submitted under subsection (b) shall include information on the following:

(1) How the grant recipients under this subpart are improving the prereading skills of preschool children.

(2) The effectiveness of the professional development program assisted under this subpart.

(3) How early childhood teachers are being prepared with scientifically based reading research on early reading development.

(4) What activities and instructional practices are most effective.

(5) How prereading instructional materials and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research are being integrated into preschools, child care agencies and programs, programs carried out under the Head Start Act, and family literacy programs.

(6) Any recommendations on strengthening or modifying this subpart.

GUIDANCE PREPARED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION FOR STATES AND TERRITORIES
PREPARING READING FIRST APPLICATIONS

A. PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

A-1. What is the purpose of the Reading First Program?

The purpose of Reading First is to ensure that all children in America learn to read well by the end of third grade.

Teaching young children to read is the most critical educational priority facing this country. Encouragingly, this is an area where some of the best and most rigorous scientifically based research is available. The Reading First program will help States and districts apply this research - and the proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with the research - to teach all children to read. By teaching all children to read well by the end of third grade, we will ensure that all students advance to later grades well prepared to achieve their full academic potential.

The Reading First program will provide the necessary assistance to States and districts to establish research-based reading programs for students in kindergarten through third grade (See Question C-1 for more information on instructional programs). Reading First funds will also focus on providing significantly increased teacher professional development to ensure that all teachers, including special education teachers, have the skills they need to teach these programs effectively. Additionally, the program provides assistance to States and districts in preparing classroom teachers to effectively screen, identify and overcome reading barriers facing their students.

Quite simply, Reading First focuses on what works, and will support proven methods of early reading instruction in classrooms. The program provides assistance to States and districts in selecting or developing effective instructional materials, programs, learning systems and strategies to implement methods that have been proven to teach reading. Reading First also provides assistance for the selection and administration of screening, diagnostic and classroom-based instructional reading assessments with proven validity and reliability, in order to measure where students are and monitor their progress.

Taken together, the complementary research-based programs, practices and tools required by Reading First will give teachers across the nation the skills and support they need to teach all children to read fluently by the end of third grade.

A-2. What is the difference between Reading First and previous Federal reading initiatives?

Reading First is the largest – and yet most focused – early reading initiative this country has ever undertaken. Reading First provides an opportunity for every State to implement reading programs that help all students achieve reading

mastery by the end of third grade. The Reading First program, by design, specifically supports States as they work with their districts to ensure that teachers learn about instruction and other activities based on scientifically based reading research, implement programs that are based on this research, and use rigorous assessments with proven validity and reliability that effectively screen, diagnose and monitor the progress of all students.

In addition to the much larger scope and level of ongoing support provided by Reading First, this program focuses directly on ensuring that every child can read at grade level or above by the end of third grade. Reading First will provide support to all K-3 students and their teachers in the schools that are served, and it is the Department's view that the classroom provides the most important teaching venue for reaching these early readers. It is in the classroom where the program will build and support the scientifically based reading foundation. Reading First seeks to embed the essential components of reading instruction into all elements of the primary, mainstream K-3 teaching structures of each State.

Scientifically based reading research has identified five essential components of reading instruction (See Question B-1). This research demonstrates that children need to master skills in these five interrelated areas in order to become proficient, successful readers. Reading First focuses instructional methods and materials, assessments and professional development on these key areas. Programs funded under Reading First will have to demonstrate their ability to address these components in a comprehensive and effective manner.

A-3. Which part of the No Child Left Behind legislation authorizes Reading First?

Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 authorizes Reading First. Reading First is the academic cornerstone of No Child Left Behind, which recognizes the importance of both improving student reading achievement and implementing programs and strategies scientifically proven to be effective. Reading First, along with the programs authorized under Title I, focuses on improving student achievement for all students, especially children in the nation's most disadvantaged schools and communities.

Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 delineates how the program will operate. The Department may issue regulations for this program and will inform States of any proposed regulations.

B. COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READING PROGRAMS

B-1. What are the essential components of reading instruction?

Scientifically based reading research has identified five essential components of effective reading instruction. To ensure that children learn to read well, explicit and systematic instruction must be provided in these five areas:

1. **Phonemic Awareness** – The ability to hear, identify and manipulate the individual sounds – phonemes – in spoken words. Phonemic awareness is the understanding that the sounds of spoken language work together to make words.
2. **Phonics** – The understanding that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes – the sounds of spoken language – and graphemes – the letters and spellings that represent those sounds in written language. Readers use these relationships to recognize familiar words accurately and automatically and to decode unfamiliar words.
3. **Vocabulary Development** – Development of stored information about the meanings and pronunciation of words necessary for communication. There are four types of vocabulary:
 - Listening vocabulary – the words needed to understand what is heard
 - Speaking vocabulary – the words used when speaking
 - Reading vocabulary – the words needed to understand what is read
 - Writing vocabulary – the words used in writing
4. **Reading fluency, including oral reading skills** – Fluency is the ability to read text accurately and quickly. It provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time.
5. **Reading comprehension strategies** – Strategies for understanding, remembering, and communicating with others about what has been read. Comprehension strategies are sets of steps that purposeful, active readers use to make sense of text.

Appendix B summarizes the key findings from scientifically based research on the essential components of reading instruction.

B-2. What is scientifically based reading research?

Scientifically based reading research is research that applies rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading

development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties. This includes research that:

1. Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
2. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
3. Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
4. Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.

B-3. What evidence is critical in evaluating scientifically based reading research?

When reviewing research findings to determine whether they meet the criteria for scientifically based reading research, State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools should consider the extent to which the research meets each of the criteria. Questions for consideration about each criterion include:

1. **Use of rigorous, systematic and empirical methods** – Does the work have a solid theoretical or research foundation? Was it carefully designed to avoid biased findings and unwarranted claims of effectiveness? Does the research clearly delineate how it was conducted, by whom it was conducted, and on whom it was conducted?
2. **Adequacy of the data analyses to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn** – Was the research designed to minimize alternative explanations for observed effects? Are the observed effects consistent with the overall conclusions and claims of effectiveness? Does the research present convincing documentation that the observed results were the result of the intervention? Does the research make clear what populations were studied (i.e., does it describe the participants' ages, as well as their demographic, cognitive, academic and behavioral characteristics) and does it describe to whom the findings can be generalized? Does the study provide a full description of the outcome measures?
3. **Reliance on measurements or observational methods that provided valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations** – Are the data based on a single-investigator, single-classroom study, or were similar data collected by multiple investigators in numerous locations? What procedures were in place to minimize researcher

biases? Do observed results “hold up” over time? Are the study interventions described in sufficient detail to allow for replicability? Does the research explain how instructional fidelity was ensured and assessed?

4. **Acceptance by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review** – Has the research been carefully reviewed by unbiased individuals who were not part of the research study? Have the findings been subjected to external scrutiny and verification?

Appendix C provides additional information on using scientifically based reading research to evaluate reading program effectiveness.

B-4. Must research related to instructional programs, methods and strategies meet all of the characteristics of scientifically based reading research?

Yes. The statute specifically requires these characteristics. For additional guidance, one may wish to consult references on reading research, such as the National Academy of Sciences’ National Research Council report *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (1998). The National Research Council, when conducting a review of reading research, followed basic guidelines for scientific method. The NRC wrote:

Our review and summary of the literature are framed by some very basic principles of evidence evaluation. These principles derive from our commitment to the scientific method, which we view not as a strict set of rules but instead as a broad framework defined by some general guidelines. Some of the most important are that (1) science aims for knowledge that is publicly verifiable, (2) science seeks testable theories – not unquestioned edicts, and (3) science employs methods of systematic empiricism. Science renders knowledge public by such procedures as peer review and such mechanisms as systematic replication. (p.34)

B-5. Is the State educational agency (SEA) responsible for ensuring that only programs based on scientifically based reading research are funded through Reading First?

Yes. In its application to the Department for Reading First funding, each State educational agency must demonstrate how it will assist local educational agencies in identifying instructional materials, programs, strategies and approaches based on scientifically based reading research, and how it will ensure that professional development activities related to reading instruction are based on scientifically based reading research. In determining which LEAs to support, it is the SEA’s responsibility to ensure that all programs, strategies and activities proposed and implemented meet the criteria for scientifically based reading research outlined in Question B-2.

B-6. What references are available for more information about scientifically based reading research?

Appendix E provides sources of additional information on scientifically based reading research.

C. DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE READING FIRST PROGRAM

C-1. What are the key elements of an effective reading program based on scientifically based reading research?

A high-quality reading program that is based on scientifically based research must include instructional content based on the five essential components of reading instruction (See Question B-1) integrated into a coherent instructional design. A coherent design includes explicit instructional strategies that address students' specific strengths and weaknesses, coordinated instructional sequences, ample practice opportunities and aligned student materials, and may include the use of targeted, scientifically based instructional strategies as appropriate. The design should also consider the allocation of time, including a protected, uninterrupted block of time for reading instruction of more than 90 minutes per day.

A high-quality reading program also includes assessment strategies for diagnosing student needs and measuring progress, as well as a professional development plan that ensures teachers have the skills and support necessary to implement the program effectively and to meet the reading needs of individual students.

C-2. What practices and strategies for classroom instruction should be evident in implementing a high-quality reading program based on scientifically based reading research?

Certain elements should be visible in any Reading First classroom in the country, regardless of which specific program is in use. Standards and accountability are the foundation of the Reading First classroom. Expectations are clear, as are strategies for monitoring progress toward meeting them. A comprehensive reading program provides the basis for instruction, and connects meaningfully to supplemental materials. In-class grouping strategies are in use, including small group instruction as appropriate to meet student needs. Student placement in groups is flexible, with placement and movement based on ongoing assessment, and different curricula may be in use to instruct different groups. There is active student engagement in a variety of reading-based activities, which connect to the five essential components of reading and to overall, clearly articulated academic goals. Effective classroom management and high levels of time on task are also evident.

C-3. What practices and strategies for professional development should be evident in an effective reading program?

Professional development related to a high-quality, effective reading program should aim to increase student achievement by enabling and ensuring the implementation of the particular program(s). Research has shown that teachers who participate in well-designed professional development activities get better results from their students. Well-designed professional development aligns clearly with the instructional program, including its research base, as well as with State academic and performance standards. Adequate time must be available for teachers to learn new concepts and to practice what they have learned. Coaches, mentors, peers and outside experts provide feedback as new concepts are put into practice. Professional development must prepare all teachers to teach all of the essential components of reading instruction (See Question B-1), and to know how they are related, the progression in which they should be taught, and the underlying structure of the English language. Teachers also must understand why some children have difficulty learning to read well and learn how to administer and interpret assessments of student progress. Professional development should also prepare teachers to effectively manage their classrooms and to maximize time on task.

C-4. What practices and strategies for assessment should be evident in an effective reading program?

A high-quality, effective reading program must include rigorous assessments with proven validity and reliability. These assessments must measure progress in the five essential components of reading instruction (See Question B-1) and identify students who may be at risk for reading failure or who are already experiencing reading difficulty. A reading program must include screening assessments, diagnostic assessments and classroom-based instructional assessments of progress. The administration of screening assessments determines which children are at risk for reading difficulty and need additional support. Diagnostic assessments provide more in-depth information on students' skills and instructional needs that forms the basis of the ideal instructional plan. Classroom-based instructional assessments determine whether students are making adequate progress or need more support to achieve grade-level reading outcomes.

D. FEDERAL AWARDS TO STATES

D-1. Will all States be able to participate in Reading First?

Reading First aims to improve student achievement in reading throughout the country. The Department anticipates that all States will participate. State applications, however, will be held to rigorous standards for approval. State plans must satisfactorily address all program requirements before the Department

awards funds to States. The Department will make technical assistance available to any State that needs support in developing its plan or meeting the approval criteria.

D-2. On what basis will the Department award Reading First funds to State educational agencies?

The Department will award Reading First grants to State educational agencies that submit an application that contains the statutorily required information (See Question E-1) upon approval by the Secretary after a rigorous expert review process (See Question E-4).

D-3. How are Reading First funds allocated to States?

For Fiscal Year 2002, Congress appropriated \$900 million for State grants under Reading First. With the exception of \$27.5 million available for National Activities, the Department will distribute these funds to SEAs with approved applications according to the proportion of children aged 5 to 17 who reside within the State and are from families with incomes below the poverty line, compared to the number of such children who reside in all States. Poverty data will be drawn from the most recent fiscal year for which satisfactory data are available. No State may receive less than one fourth of one percent of the total amount allocated to States, even if the proportion of children described above for that State is less than this percentage. The allocation amounts for future years will be determined by the appropriations for those years.

An exception to this formula applies to Puerto Rico. The percentage of Reading First funds allocated to Puerto Rico may not exceed the percentage of Title I, Part A funds received by Puerto Rico in the previous year.

D-4. When will Reading First funds become available to States?

Fiscal year 2002 Reading First funds become available for award to States on July 1, 2002 and remain available to the Department for award to States until September 30, 2003. States will receive their awards only upon successful approval of their applications.

D-5. When may a State educational agency submit its application for Reading First funds?

A State educational agency may submit its application for Reading First funds at any time after the Department releases application instructions, which is expected to be on or around April 1, 2002. Expert review of applications will occur in rounds, beginning thirty days after the release of the application instructions. Thus, the Department encourages SEAs to submit their applications as early as possible so that they can receive funding on a timely basis and begin the process

of awarding competitive subgrants to eligible local educational agencies. The last possible date for submission of applications for FY 2002 Reading First funds is expected to be July 1, 2003.

D-6. What is the duration of a State's Reading First award?

The Department will award Reading First grants to State educational agencies for a six-year period, subject to sufficient appropriations and submission and review of progress reports (See Questions G-5 and G-7).

D-7. What happens to a State's allocation if it does not apply for Reading First funds?

The Department anticipates that all States will participate in Reading First. However, if a State educational agency does not apply for Reading First funds, the Secretary will reallocate those funds by formula to participating States (See Question D-3). A State's failure to participate in Reading First will not have any effect on its receipt of other Federal resources.

D-8. What happens if a State's application for Reading First funds is not approved?

Any State educational agency that does not receive approval for its Reading First application will have an opportunity to address the issues and concerns raised by the expert panel reviewers. SEAs will be able to resubmit their applications for follow-on review by the expert panel. The Department will provide focused technical assistance as needed and will continue to work with the SEA until the application meets the review criteria outlined in Question E-5. While there is no limit to the number of reviews an individual SEA application can receive, the Department will announce any redistribution of Reading First funds not awarded to SEAs among States with approved Reading First plans 30 days before the period of Federal obligation for the funds expires on September 30, 2003.

D-9. Are the Outlying Areas and the Bureau of Indian Affairs eligible to receive Reading First funds?

Yes. The Secretary must reserve one half of one percent for awards to the Outlying Areas (United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands), and one half of one percent for award to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The consolidated grant provisions for the Outlying Areas apply to awards under this program.

The Freely Associated States (the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Palau) are not eligible for Reading First funds.

D-10. What are Reading First Targeted Assistance Grants (Section 1204) and what is the timeline for applying?

Reading First Targeted Assistance grants will be available, on a competitive basis, to State educational agencies that demonstrate an increase in student achievement related to the Reading First program. In order to receive a Targeted Assistance grant, an SEA must demonstrate that increasing percentages of third graders in each of several groups in local educational agencies receiving Reading First funds are reaching the proficient level for each of two consecutive years. It must also demonstrate that schools receiving Reading First funds are improving the reading skills of students in grades 1 through 3 based on valid and reliable screening, diagnostic and classroom-based instructional reading assessments for each of the same two consecutive years and that the percentage of students in the State who are reading at grade level or above has significantly increased. Subject to appropriations, Reading First Targeted Assistance Grants will begin in fiscal year 2004. Application requirements and timeline information will be made available to States during fiscal year 2003.

E. STATE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**E-1. What are the key issues that a State educational agency must address in its application for Reading First funding?**

In their Reading First applications, States will describe their plans to provide competitive subgrants to targeted schools and districts and to use significant State leadership funds in order to improve reading instruction and student achievement. In developing their plans, State educational agencies should consider the coordination of Reading First funds with other Federal, State and local funds aimed at improving reading achievement. A State educational agency's application for Reading First funding must include:

1. **Reading and Literacy Partnership (hereinafter referred to as Reading Leadership Team)** – The application must include an assurance that the Governor of the State, in consultation with the SEA, established a Reading Leadership Team that coordinated the development of the application and that will assist in the oversight and evaluation of the State's Reading First program. (See Questions E-6 and E-7 for requirements related to this team.)
2. **Expansion of Reading Excellence Activities** – Any State that received a grant under the Reading Excellence Act must describe its strategy for the expansion, continuation or modification of its activities under that Act and how those activities fit into its overall Reading First plans.
3. **Participation in National Evaluation** – The application must include an assurance that the State educational agency and any local educational agencies

receiving a subgrant from the SEA will, if requested, participate in the Department's national evaluation of the Reading First program.

4. **Reading First Plan** – The application must describe the State educational agency's plan for implementing the Reading First program. The plan must include the following:
 - a. **Identifying reading assessments with proven validity and reliability** – The SEA must describe how it will assist local educational agencies in identifying screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments.
 - b. **Identifying scientifically based materials and programs** – The SEA must describe how it will assist local educational agencies in identifying instructional materials, programs, strategies and approaches that are based on scientifically based reading research.
 - c. **Professional development** – The SEA must describe how professional development activities supported with Reading First funds will effectively improve instructional practices for reading and ensure that these activities are based on scientifically based reading research. The SEA must also describe how it will coordinate professional development activities funded through Reading First with activities funded with other Federal, State and local level funds.
 - d. **Implementing the essential components of reading instruction --** The SEA must describe how funded activities will help teachers and other instructional staff to implement the essential components of reading. (See Question B-1.)
 - e. **Subgrant process** – The application must describe the process by which the SEA will make competitive grants to eligible local educational agencies, including how the SEA will ensure that eligible LEAs receiving subgrants will use practices based on scientifically based reading research. The SEA may wish to provide its draft LEA application or other draft guidance, if available.
 - f. **Geographic diversity** – The SEA must describe how it will ensure, to the extent practicable, that it will award subgrants to eligible local educational agencies in both rural and urban areas.
 - g. **Program coordination** – The SEA must describe how it will build on and promote coordination among literacy programs in the State to increase their overall effectiveness in improving reading instruction.

- h. **Evaluation Strategies** – The SEA must describe how it will assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the activities carried out under the program on a regular basis. SEAs must use valid and reliable instruments to measure progress in improving student achievement and should describe how it will use these data in determining whether local educational agencies should receive continuation funding of their subgrant awards.

E-2. May a State address the issues identified in Question E-1 in its ESEA consolidated plan rather than submitting a separate Reading First application?

No. While the Department encourages States to consider the coordination of Reading First with other Federal programs in the development of their consolidated plans, the Reading First legislation specifically requires review of State applications for Reading First funds by experts convened by the Department, the National Institute for Literacy, the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. This requirement makes it infeasible to permit States to apply for Reading First through the consolidated application.

E-3. May a State submit a modified application for Reading First funds if it has received a grant under the Reading Excellence Act?

Although SEAs must submit a new application for Reading First, the Department recognizes that State educational agencies that received grants under the Reading Excellence Act may have previously submitted some of the information required in the Reading First application. SEAs that have received grants under the Reading Excellence Act are encouraged, where appropriate, to include relevant information, plans and/or descriptions of activities as part of their Reading First application submissions to avoid the duplication of previous efforts. In particular, States may find portions of the Reading Excellence application Section 2, Part B (Understanding of Scientifically Based Reading Research), Section 2, Part C (Current State Efforts in Reading), Section 3, Part B, Subpart 2 (Use of Funds for Teacher Professional Development), Section 3, Part B, Subpart 3 (Application Process) and Section 3, Part B, Subpart 4 (Technical Assistance) relevant to their Reading First applications, and may draw from these sections where appropriate to satisfy Reading First requirements. While only one question in the Reading First application expressly addresses the relationship between REA and Reading First activities, States should consider the connection throughout their Reading First plans.

Further, as Reading First plans must include statewide professional development activities and must ensure that all children served receive reading instruction based on scientifically based reading research, modified Reading Excellence Act activities are likely to form just part of an SEA's approved Reading First plan. It

is incumbent upon applicant SEAs to describe how and to what extent current Reading Excellence activities can be successfully leveraged within the proposed Reading First statewide plan.

E-4. Who will review State applications for Reading First?

An expert review panel will evaluate State applications. The Secretary, in consultation with the National Institute for Literacy, will convene the panel. The panel will recommend grant applications to the Secretary for funding or recommend clarifications or changes deemed necessary to improve the likelihood of the plan's success. As required by the statute, the review panel of experts will include individuals selected by the Secretary of Education, the National Institute for Literacy, the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Each panel will likely include at least one person with expertise in the following: scientifically based educational research, professional development and teacher training, instructional assessments, professional management, SEA program implementation and administration, and teacher education. Together, this team of experts and professionals with relevant, real-world experience will be exceptionally qualified to evaluate, and, where necessary, to help improve both the suitability and feasibility of each State's Reading First plan.

E-5. What specific review criteria will be used to evaluate applications?

A State educational agency's application must meet rigorous standards demonstrating capacity to improve reading achievement significantly. The application must meet all standards in order for an SEA's funds to be awarded. Technical assistance will be available throughout the review process to ensure the quality of every component of the plan. The expert review panel will expect to see the following criteria included in the application:

1. **Improving Reading Instruction** – The SEA's application describes the State's rationale for using scientifically based reading research to improve classroom reading instruction in the State, and its plan for achieving that goal. This part of the application includes the State's plan for subgranting Reading First funds to targeted LEAs and schools, as well as for providing statewide professional development based on scientifically based reading research. The application must specifically address the following:
 - a. Current Reading Initiatives and Identified Gaps
 - b. State Outline and Rationale for Using Scientifically Based Reading Research
 - c. State Definition of Subgrant Eligibility

- d. Selection Criteria for Awarding Subgrants
 - i. Schools to be served
 - ii. Instructional Assessments
 - iii. Instructional Strategies and Programs
 - iv. Instructional Materials
 - v. Instructional Leadership
 - vi. District and School Based Professional Development
 - vii. District Based Technical Assistance
 - viii. Evaluation Strategies
 - ix. Access to Print Materials
 - x. Additional Criteria
 - xi. Competitive Priorities
 - e. Process for Awarding Subgrants
 - f. State Professional Development Plan
 - g. Integration of Proposed Reading First Activities with REA
2. **State Leadership and Management** – The SEA’s application describes the State’s plan for providing coherent leadership by 1) providing targeted LEAs and schools that receive Reading First subgrants with technical assistance in implementing strategies to improve reading instruction that are based on scientifically based reading research; and 2) building a statewide Reading Leadership Team to coordinate State efforts to improve reading instruction and to provide a leadership capability that approves and monitors the underlying scientific base of the instruction implemented by targeted districts and schools. The application must also demonstrate a feasible plan to effectively manage its Reading First program. The application must specifically address the following:
- a. State Technical Assistance Plan
 - b. Building Statewide Infrastructure

- c. State Management Plan
3. **State Reporting and Evaluation** – The SEA’s application describes the strategies the State will use to evaluate the effectiveness of its Reading First program and to report required information annually. Each SEA will have to explain how its evaluations will effectively monitor the academic impact of Reading First on its recipient LEAs. Further, the SEA must explain what steps the SEA will take in the event of inadequate academic progress within LEAs receiving subgrant awards. The application must specifically address the following:
- a. Evaluation Strategies
 - b. State Reporting
 - c. Participation in National Evaluation
4. **Classroom Level Impact** – The SEA’s application describes how the many facets of its Reading First plan will result in improved classroom reading instruction. The application includes the SEA’s vision for how a Reading First classroom should look and demonstrates the integration and coherence among the many components of the plan. The application must specifically address the following:
- a. Key Reading First Classroom Characteristics
 - b. Coherence

E-6. What is the requirement for a Reading Leadership Team?

Prior to applying for Reading First, the Governor of the State, in consultation with the State educational agency, must establish a Reading Leadership Team. The Department strongly encourages SEAs to create a Reading Leadership Team that monitors and examines the scientific base for instruction in schools that need to improve reading achievement. This reading team will ensure a seamless, complementary approach to reading achievement throughout the State. SEAs must include in their application an assurance that the Reading Leadership Team coordinated the development of the State’s Reading First plan and how it will assist in oversight and evaluation.

The team must include, at minimum, the following participants:

- 1. The Governor of the State
- 2. The chief State school officer

3. The chairman and the ranking member of each committee of the State legislature that is responsible for education policy
4. A representative, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer, of at least one local educational agency that is eligible to receive a Reading First subgrant
5. A representative, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer, of a community-based organization working with children to improve their reading skills, particularly a community-based organization that uses tutors and scientifically based reading research
6. State directors of appropriate Federal or State programs that have a strong reading component, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer
7. A parent of a public or private school student or a parent who educates his or her child at home, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer
8. A teacher, who may be a special education teacher, who successfully teaches reading, and another instructional staff member, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer
9. A family literacy service provider, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer

The Reading Leadership Team may include additional participants, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer. Additional participants may include:

1. An institution of higher education operating a program of teacher preparation based on scientifically based reading research;
2. A local educational agency;
3. A private nonprofit or for-profit eligible professional development provider providing instruction based on scientifically based reading research;
4. An adult education provider;
5. A volunteer organization that is involved in reading programs; or
6. A school library or a public library that offers reading or literacy programs for children or families

E-7. Will a Reading and Literacy Partnership established to meet the requirements of the Reading Excellence Act meet the requirements of Reading First?

Yes. If a State educational agency established a Reading and Literacy Partnership to meet the requirements of the Reading Excellence Act, that partnership may be considered a Reading Leadership Team for the purposes of Reading First.

F. FUNDS RESERVED FOR STATE USE

F-1. May a State educational agency reserve a portion of its allocation for State use?

Yes. A State educational agency that receives a Reading First grant may reserve up to 20 percent of its total allocation to carry out activities related to professional inservice and preservice development; technical assistance for local educational agencies and schools; and planning, administration and reporting. By design, this significant level of funding will provide States with the resources and opportunity to extend this reading initiative and to improve instruction beyond the specific districts and schools that receive Reading First subgrants.

These funds will assist States in building and maintaining statewide capacity to teach all children to read by the end of third grade.

F-2. For what purposes may a State educational agency use funds reserved for State use?

Of the total funds reserved for State use (up to 20 percent of the State's total allocation), a State educational agency may expend up to 65 percent for professional inservice and preservice development, up to 25 percent for technical assistance to local educational agencies and schools, and up to 10 percent for planning, administration and reporting. An SEA must use any funds not reserved for these purposes for subgrants to local educational agencies. Funds reserved for State use shall be used for the following purposes:

1. Professional Inservice and Preservice Development and Review

- a. **Development and implementation of a program of professional development** for teachers of kindergarten through grade 3, including special education teachers, that will prepare these teachers in all the essential components of reading instruction. This includes providing teachers with information on instructional materials, programs, strategies and approaches based on scientifically based reading research, including early intervention and reading remediation materials, programs and approaches, as well as on instruction in the

use of valid and reliable screening, diagnostic and classroom-based instructional reading assessment instruments and other procedures that effectively identify students who may be at risk for reading failure or who are having reading difficulty. An ‘eligible professional development provider’ must deliver this program. (See Appendix D for definitions.) Professional development must clearly align with the instructional program, including its research base, as well as with State academic and performance standards. The professional development program must provide adequate time for teachers to learn new concepts and to practice what they have learned, and should include a variety of delivery methods.

- b. **Strengthening and enhancing preservice courses** for students preparing, at public institutions of higher education in the State, to teach kindergarten through grade 3. This would be done by reviewing course content to determine if content is consistent with the most current findings of scientifically based reading research, including findings on the essential components of reading instruction, offering recommendations based on this review to ensure that such institutions offer courses that meet the highest standards, and preparing a report on the results of these recommendations. The report would be submitted to the Reading Leadership Team of the State and made available for public review via the Internet.
- c. **Improving State licensure and certification standards** by making recommendations as to how standards in the area of reading might be improved.

2. Technical Assistance for Local Educational Agencies (one or both of the following)

- a. **Assisting local educational agencies** in accomplishing the tasks required to design and to implement a Reading First program. This includes assistance in selecting and implementing a program or programs of reading instruction based on scientifically based reading research, selecting rigorous screening, diagnostic and classroom-based instructional reading assessments with proven validity and reliability, and identifying eligible professional development providers to help prepare reading teachers to teach students using these programs and assessments.
- b. **Providing expanded opportunities** to students in kindergarten through grade 3 who are served by eligible local educational agencies for receiving reading assistance from alternative providers. SEAs seeking to use funds for this purpose must ensure that these providers use programs and strategies that are based on scientifically based

reading research and the essential components of reading instruction and that align with the SEA's overall Reading First plan.

3. **Planning, Administration and Reporting** – including administering competitive subgrants to eligible local educational agencies, using valid and reliable measures to assess and evaluate on a regular basis whether local educational agency Reading First activities have been effective in increasing the number of children in grades 1 through 3 served by Reading First who can read at or above grade level, and meeting reporting requirements.

F-3. Are there any required priorities for funds reserved for State use?

Yes. A State educational agency shall give priority in carrying out the activities described in Question F-2 to serving schools that both (1) are operated by eligible local educational agencies and that have the highest percentages or numbers of students in kindergarten through grade 3 reading below grade level, based on the most currently available data, and (2) are identified for school improvement under Title I, Part A or have the highest percentages or numbers of children counted for allocations under Title I, Part A.

F-4. Must activities supported by Reading First funds reserved for State use be based on scientifically based reading research?

Yes. All activities related to professional development and technical assistance supported by Reading First funds reserved for State use must be based on scientifically based reading research, as described in the State educational agency's application for funding.

G. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

G-1. Must a State educational agency conduct an evaluation of its Reading First program?

Yes. Each State educational agency that receives Reading First funds must assess and evaluate, on a regular basis, the progress of local educational agencies that receive subgrants in meeting the goals of the Reading First program. SEAs must use valid and reliable instruments to measure progress in improving student achievement, and should use this data in determining whether local educational agencies should receive continuation funding of their subgrant awards. (See Question H-15.) The Secretary encourages States to submit their evaluation to the Department as a supplement to the required annual report. (See Question G-4.)

G-2. Who should conduct the State's evaluation of its Reading First program?

Each State educational agency must contract, to the extent practicable, with an entity that conducts scientifically based reading research to evaluate its Reading First program. In addition, the Department encourages SEAs to contract with entities that also conduct program evaluations. The SEA remains responsible for submitting all required information and reports to the Department.

G-3. What information must a State educational agency that receives a Reading First grant provide to the Department?

A State educational agency that receives a Reading First grant must submit to the Department an annual report on the State's implementation of the Reading First program. At the end of the third year of Reading First, the SEA must submit to the Department a midpoint progress report describing the achievement of students served by the Reading First program.

In addition, during 2002 and beyond, the Department will work with SEAs to establish data standards for performance indicators and other information collected from States. The Department will confer with SEA and other officials, the research community, information technology vendors, and other interested parties on ways in which States, LEAs and schools can collect and electronically record useful baseline and follow-up data through an internet based format. The new format should accommodate the measurement of success relative to the various indicators that the Department and States have adopted. Reporting guidelines, therefore, will stress electronic reporting and provide States with additional options in fulfilling federal information requests.

G-4. What information must be included in the annual report?

The annual report must include the following information. The SEA must ensure that it reports all data in a manner that protects the privacy of individuals.

1. **Implementation Evidence** – The SEA must demonstrate that it has met all program requirements and obligations related to the implementation and administration of the Reading First program.
2. **Achievement Gains** – The SEA must specifically identify the schools and local educational agencies within the State that report the largest gains in reading achievement.
3. **Program Effectiveness** – The SEA must report on the progress the SEA and local educational agencies are making in reducing the number of students in grades 1 through 3 served by Reading First who are reading below grade level. SEAs should select methods of collecting and reporting this

information that will result in the submission of data that are valid and reliable.

4. **Reducing Students Reading Below Grade Level Statewide** – The SEA must report on whether it and local educational agencies have significantly increased the number of students reading at grade level or above, including whether the percentages of students in certain categories reading at grade level or above have increased.

G-5. What information must be included in the midpoint progress report?

Each State educational agency must provide a progress report to the Department within sixty days of the termination of the third year – the midpoint - of the overall grant period. The midpoint progress report must include information on the progress the SEA and local educational agencies within the State are making in reducing the number of students served by Reading First in grades 1 through 3 who are reading below grade level. SEAs should select methods of collecting and reporting this information that will result in the submission of data that are valid and reliable. The report must also include evidence from the SEA and LEAs within the State that the number of students reading at grade level or above has significantly increased, including the percentages of students in certain categories.

G-6. Who will evaluate the midpoint progress report?

The expert review panel convened to review State applications (See Question E-4) will evaluate third-year progress reports.

G-7. What are the consequences if a State educational agency is not making significant progress in meeting the purposes of the Reading First program?

If the Secretary determines, after submission and panel review of a State educational agency's midpoint progress report and based on ongoing Department monitoring, that the SEA is not making significant progress in meeting the purposes of the Reading First program, the Secretary may withhold from the SEA, in whole or in part, further payments of Reading First funds in accordance with section 455 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), or take other actions authorized by law that the Secretary determines necessary, including providing technical assistance upon request of the SEA.

H. STATE AWARDS TO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES (LEAs)

H-1. What entities are eligible to apply to a State educational agency for Reading First funds?

A local educational agency that meets both of the following criteria is eligible to apply to its State educational agency for Reading First funds:

1. The LEA is among the local educational agencies in the State with the highest numbers or percentages of students in kindergarten through grade 3 reading below grade level, based on the most current data available; and
2. The LEA has jurisdiction over at least one of the following:
 - a. A geographic area that includes an area designated as an empowerment zone, or an enterprise community, under part I of subchapter U of chapter I of the Internal Revenue Code;
 - b. A significant number or percentage of schools that are identified for school improvement under Title I, Part A; or
 - c. The highest numbers or percentages of children who are counted for allocations under Title I, Part A, in comparison to other LEAs in the State

SEAs have flexibility to define and establish these eligibility criteria within the statutory guidelines. In defining eligibility, SEAs should consider many factors, including the number and size of subgrant awards. LEAs must receive sufficient funding and support to improve reading instruction. Eligibility pools and anticipated numbers of subgrants that seem too large to accomplish this are unlikely to be approved by the expert panel. The applicant pool that results from this definition should be sufficiently targeted to ensure adequate funding and support, yet broad enough to ensure that only applications of the highest quality are funded. SEAs should also ensure that their eligibility definition results in a geographically diverse applicant pool.

H-2. May a consortium of local educational agencies apply to their State educational agency?

Yes. Consistent with Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) requirements, two or more local educational agencies may apply to their State educational agency as a consortium. Each local educational agency within the consortium must meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Question H-1.

H-3. On what basis does a State educational agency award subgrants to eligible local educational agencies?

A State educational agency awards subgrants to eligible LEAs on a competitive basis. The SEA must subgrant at least 80 percent of its total Reading First award to eligible LEAs.

In order to best address the intent of the legislation – that is, to ensure that every student can read at grade level or above by the end of third grade through the use of programs, materials, strategies and approaches based on scientifically based reading research – an SEA should develop selection criteria that truly distinguish among the quality of programs and approaches proposed by applicants. SEAs should seek to fund only those proposals that show real promise for successful implementation, particularly at the classroom level, and for raising student achievement.

H-4. Are there any required priorities for awarding Reading First subgrants?

In making awards to local educational agencies, SEAs must give priority to eligible local educational agencies that meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. At least fifteen percent of the students served by the eligible local educational agency are from families with incomes below the poverty line; or
2. At least 6,500 children served by the eligible local educational agency are from families with incomes below the poverty line.

H-5. Do State educational agencies have discretion to define the ‘poverty line,’ as referred to in Question H-4?

No. In accordance with Section 9101(33) of ESEA, the poverty line refers to the official Office of Management and Budget definition, which is revised annually. The Department provides these data to SEAs annually as part of the administration of Title I, Part A.

H-6. What discretion does a State educational agency have in selecting competitive criteria for its subgrant process?

In addition to the required priority described in Question H-4, a State educational agency may establish other priorities as a part of its overall reform strategy that further the purposes of the Reading First program. However, such priorities may not negate the effect of the required priority, and should give LEAs or programs a competitive edge in the subgrant selection process, rather than entirely preclude non-priority LEAs or programs.

In order to ensure that subgrants to LEAs are of the highest quality, the Department strongly encourages States to award a competitive priority to LEAs that can demonstrate evidence of successful implementation of instructional strategies and programs based on scientifically based reading research. This evidence should be measured using appropriate assessment instruments with proven validity and reliability. A competitive priority may also be awarded to LEAs that demonstrate the need for Reading First funds in the specific schools that will receive Reading First funds. States should also consider awarding a priority to LEAs that can demonstrate leadership and commitment to improving reading achievement, as well as to LEAs that will leverage existing reading initiative components for maximum effect within an overall Reading First plan. In addition, the Department encourages SEAs to award a competitive priority to LEAs that receive Early Reading First grants.

H-7. What responsibility does a State educational agency have with respect to local educational agencies' and schools' choices of reading programs?

In its application for Reading First Funds, a State educational agency must describe the process and selection criteria by which the SEA will make competitive grants to eligible local educational agencies and how the SEA will ensure that the instructional materials, programs, strategies and approaches it will fund, as well as its professional development activities related to reading instruction, are based on scientifically based reading research. Thus, the SEA is responsible for ensuring that Reading First funds go only to LEAs that will implement high-quality programs that meet the requirements of Reading First. In carrying out this responsibility, an SEA has considerable flexibility. For example, an SEA may establish a competitive preference for particular materials, programs, strategies and approaches based on scientifically based reading research that the SEA determines are particularly effective.

H-8. May a State educational agency use Reading First funds to award a planning grant to a local educational agency that is still developing its Reading First plan?

No. Reading First grants are for implementation and not planning purposes. Planning activities, such as conducting a needs assessment, are not appropriate uses of Reading First funds. However, certain activities, such as the selection of instructional reading assessments, that contribute to the further development of the LEA's Reading First program are permissible. See Question I-4 for more information on permissible activities.

H-9. May Reading First funds be used to support LEAs and schools that are already implementing a reading program based on scientifically based reading research?

Yes. States are encouraged to award Reading First subgrants to local educational agencies that will use the funds to support schools that have begun to implement a reading program based on scientifically based reading research. These schools must, however, meet all program requirements and should use their Reading First funds to expand and strengthen their existing program.

H-10. May LEAs and schools that currently receive Reading Excellence funds also receive Reading First funds?

Yes. Schools that are currently receiving funds through the Reading Excellence Act may also receive Reading First funds. These schools must meet all Reading First program requirements, and should use their Reading First funds to expand and strengthen their existing reading programs to ensure that all students can read at grade level or above by the end of third grade. It is the Department's view that the mainstream K-3 classroom is the primary venue for Reading First activities.

H-11. Do State educational agencies have flexibility regarding the timing of their subgrant competitions?

Yes. Reading First funds that become available to the Department on July 1, 2002 will be available for obligation by an SEA or an LEA through September 30, 2004. (This period of availability includes an initial fifteen-month obligation period and a twelve-month 'carryover' period authorized by section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act.) Accordingly, an SEA should consider the urgency for LEAs and schools to improve reading instruction, as well as the time needed by LEAs to develop high-quality Reading First programs. An SEA may wish to run separate competitions, awarding a portion of its funds soon after the State receives them while reserving the remaining funds for LEAs that need additional time to develop their plans.

H-12. In applying to its State educational agency for a competitive award under this program, what information must a local educational agency include in its subgrant application?

An eligible local educational agency must submit an application to the State educational agency in order to be considered for Reading First funding. In addition to any information required by the State, applications must demonstrate how the LEA will carry out the following required activities:

1. **Instructional reading assessments** -- Selection and administration of rigorous screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading

assessments with proven validity and reliability, and how information from these assessments will be used to make instructional decisions.

2. **Reading program** -- Selection and implementation of a program of reading instruction that is based on scientifically based reading research and that includes the essential components of reading instruction and provides such instruction to children in kindergarten through grade 3. LEAs must demonstrate how this reading program will be implemented, and that it will not be layered on top of non-research based programs already in use. The scientifically based reading program must also align to State academic and performance standards to ensure that students will be able to reach the proficiency level on State assessments.
3. **Instructional materials** – Selection and implementation of instructional materials, including education technology such as software and other digital curricula, that are based on scientifically based reading research.
4. **Professional development** -- Professional development for teachers of kindergarten through grade 3 and special education teachers of kindergarten through grade 12, that will prepare these teachers in all the essential components of reading instruction and to use the selected instructional materials. Professional development must clearly align with the instructional program, including its research base, as well as with State academic and performance standards, and include adequate time for teachers to learn new concepts and to practice what they have learned. Professional development must be an ongoing, continuous activity, and not consist of ‘one-shot’ workshops or lectures. Delivery mechanisms should include the use of coaches and other teachers of reading who provide feedback as instructional strategies are put into practice.
5. **Evaluation strategies** – Collection and summary of data relating to the program. Evaluation strategies must include the use of valid and reliable measures to assess the effectiveness of local Reading First activities for individual schools and the district as a whole.
6. **Reporting** – LEAs must report data for all students and categories of students described in the State’s adequate yearly progress definition.
7. **Access to reading material** – Promotion of reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading material.

See question I-4 for more information on the required uses of funds. Each LEA application must also include the following assurances:

1. A description of the steps the LEA proposes to take to overcome barriers to equitable program participation, as required under section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act
2. The general assurances in section 9306 of the ESEA
3. The lower-tier certification covering lobbying and debarment/suspension under 34 CFR Parts 82 and 85.

H-13.What is the minimum amount of Reading First funds that a State educational agency may provide to a local educational agency?

Each LEA that receives a competitive subgrant must receive at least the same percentage of the State's total Reading First subgrant funds as the LEA received of the total Title I, Part A funds received by all LEAs in the State for the preceding fiscal year. For example, if an LEA received 3 percent of the total amount of the State's Title I, Part A funds in FY 2001, that LEA must receive at least 3 percent of the total amount of Reading First funds subgranted in that State in FY 2002.

Once an SEA has determined the minimum amount that an LEA can receive as described above, it must also ensure that Reading First subgrants are of sufficient size and scope to enable eligible LEAs to fully implement programs to improve reading instruction. The expert review panel will consider whether the number of subgrants an SEA proposes to make is likely to result in awards of sufficient size and scope, and is unlikely to recommend approval of plans that will result in diluted, insufficient amounts of funding to LEAs. The amount of funds awarded to an LEA must also relate to the number or percentage of students in kindergarten through grade 3 in that LEA who are reading below grade level.

The requirement described under this question does not create an entitlement for LEAs. In order to obtain subgrants, LEAs must succeed in the State's competition for funding.

H-14.For how many years may a particular local educational agency or school receive Reading First assistance?

By statute, State educational agencies may award Reading First subgrants for a period of not more than six years. However, the Department strongly encourages States to limit the subgrant period to a duration of two to three years. After the initial subgrant period, LEAs that have shown strong reading gains and significantly increased student achievement would be eligible for renewal of their subgrants.

H-15. On what basis does a State educational agency make continuation awards to local educational agencies?

In making continuation awards to local educational agencies, State educational agencies must assess the progress each local educational agency has made in improving student reading achievement and implementing the program outlined in its subgrant application.

H-16. May a State educational agency discontinue funding to a local educational agency that is not making substantial progress?

Yes. A State educational agency may discontinue funding to any local educational agency that is not making substantial progress in improving student reading achievement and implementing the program outlined in its subgrant application.

H-17. Are public charter schools eligible to participate in the Reading First program?

Yes. Under State law, public charter schools are generally either local educational agencies or public schools within an LEA. As such, public charter schools are eligible for support on the same basis as other public schools or LEAs in the State.

If State law recognizes a charter school as an LEA and the charter school meets the eligibility requirements outlined in Question H-1, it may apply to its State educational agency for a subgrant as an LEA. If a charter school is a school within an LEA, it may receive funding through its LEA's subgrant if it meets the criteria outlined in Question I-1.

H-18. What are the implications of the Charter School Expansion Act of 1998 on Reading First awards?

The Charter School Expansion Act reinforces the Department's policy that public charter schools must be able to compete for Reading First funds on an equal footing with other public schools and local educational agencies. They may not be discriminated against in competing for funds simply because of their charter school status, nor may competitive preferences or absolute priorities be established for the purpose of excluding charter schools from competing for Reading First funds.

H-19. May charter schools that are not local educational agencies apply directly to the State educational agency for Reading First subgrants?

No. Only local educational agencies may apply directly to a State educational agency for Reading First funds. A charter school that is not an LEA under State law may not apply directly to the State for funding.

H-20. May an intermediate unit within a State apply for Reading First funds on behalf of eligible schools for which it provides services?

An intermediate unit may only apply for Reading First funds if it is a local educational agency under section 9101(26) of ESEA and meets the eligibility requirements outlined in Question H-1.

H-21. Are private school children eligible to participate in the Reading First program?

Yes. Funds awarded to State educational agencies and local educational agencies under Reading First are subject to the requirements of Section 9501 of ESEA (Participation by Private School Children and Teachers). The statute requires LEAs to provide private school children and their teachers or other educational personnel with educational services that address their needs related to Reading First on an equitable basis with public school children and teachers. LEAs must provide these services in a timely manner.

Funds provided for educational services and other benefits for private school children and their teachers must be equal, taking into account the number and educational needs of the children to be served, to the funds provided for participating public school children.

All services and benefits provided to private school children and their teachers under Reading First must be secular, neutral, and non-ideological.

Local educational agencies seeking Reading First subgrants must consult with appropriate private school officials during the design and development of their Reading First plans on such issues as determining eligibility of private school children (see question H-22); identifying the children's needs; what services will be offered; how, where, and by whom services will be provided; and how the services will be assessed.

H-22. How is the eligibility of private school children determined?

In general, private school children in the areas served by public schools receiving Reading First funds would be eligible. This determination can be made *either* by the residence of private school children in the attendance area of a public school receiving Reading First funds or by the location of a private school in the

attendance area of a public school receiving Reading First funds. For additional information on which public schools within an eligible local educational agency may receive Reading First funds, see question I-1.

H-23. If a State educational agency chooses not to apply for Reading First funding, may local educational agencies in that State still receive Reading First funds?

No. The Department will reallocate funds allotted to a State educational agency that chooses not to participate in Reading First to other States participating in the program. (See Question D-7.)

H-24. Are Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools eligible to compete for Reading First funds?

Yes. The Department will allocate Reading First funds to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, pending submission and approval of its application. In turn, BIA will make subgrants through a competitive process. In addition, a BIA school that is considered by the State in which it is located to be a local educational agency is eligible to apply to the State for Reading First funds as an LEA. However, while these schools may compete under both the BIA and SEA competitions, they may not receive Reading First funds from both the BIA and the SEA.

H-25. If generic proposals are submitted to a State educational agency on behalf of different local educational agencies, should the SEA consider such proposals for funding?

While local educational agencies may work with an external service provider or a proposal-writing firm in developing its application for Reading First funds, the submission of an “off-the-shelf” proposal without a direct focus on the needs of that LEA is unlikely to address program requirements satisfactorily. The State educational agency should carefully evaluate the content of such proposals, and should not fund inadequate “off-the-shelf” or generic proposals.

I. LOCAL USE OF FUNDS

I-1. In which schools may a local educational agency use Reading First funds?

A local educational agency that receives a Reading First subgrant may only distribute funds to schools within that LEA that are both:

1. Among the schools served by the LEA with the highest percentages or numbers of students in kindergarten through grade 3 reading below grade level, based on the most current data available; and

2. Identified for school improvement under Title I, Part A or have the highest percentages or numbers of children counted for allocations under section Title I, Part A.

I-2. May middle schools, junior high schools or high schools receive Reading First funds?

No. The purpose of the Reading First program is to ensure that every student can read at grade level or above by the end of grade 3. Only schools that include kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2 or grade 3 may receive Reading First funds. Schools that include additional grades may only use Reading First funds for purposes related to kindergarten through grade 3 instruction. An exception applies to professional development for K-12 special education teachers. LEAs must provide professional development on the essential components of reading instruction to all K-12 special education teachers, including those based in middle schools, junior high schools and high schools.

I-3. May pre-kindergarten programs receive Reading First funds?

No. Reading First funds may only serve students in kindergarten through grade 3. Early Reading First, a separate program authorized under Title I, Part B, Subpart 2, will award funds on a competitive basis to support local efforts to enhance the early language, literacy and prereading development of preschool age children through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research. For more information on the relationship between Reading First and Early Reading First, see question J-2.

I-4. For what activities may a local educational agency or school use Reading First funds?

An eligible local educational agency that receives a Reading First subgrant must use the funds to carry out the following activities:

1. **Instructional reading assessments** -- Selection and administration of rigorous screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments with proven validity and reliability. These assessments must measure progress in the essential components of reading instruction (see Question B-1) and identify students who may be at risk for reading failure or who are already experiencing reading difficulty.
2. **Reading program** -- Selection and implementation of a program of reading instruction based on scientifically based reading research that includes the essential components of reading instruction and provides such instruction to children in kindergarten through grade 3 in the schools served by the LEA, including children:

- a. With reading difficulties
- b. At risk of referral to special education based on those difficulties
- c. Evaluated under section 614 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act but not identified as having a disability (in accordance with IDEA section 614(b)(5) and as defined in section 602)
- d. Served under IDEA primarily due to a specific learning disability related to reading (as defined in IDEA section 602)
- e. Deficient in the essential components of reading instruction
- f. Identified as having limited English proficiency

A high-quality reading program that is based on scientifically based research must include instructional content based on the five essential components of reading instruction (See Question B-1) integrated into a coherent instructional design. A coherent design includes explicit instructional strategies, coordinated instructional sequences, ample practice opportunities and aligned student materials. The design should also consider the allocation of time, ensuring a protected, dedicated block of time for reading instruction.

- 3. **Instructional materials** – Selection and implementation of instructional materials, including education technology such as software and other digital curricula, that are based on scientifically based reading research
- 4. **Professional development** -- Professional development for teachers of kindergarten through grade 3 and special education teachers of kindergarten through grade 12 that will prepare these teachers and other instructional staff in all of the essential components of reading instruction. Professional development must be provided that will assist teachers in becoming fully qualified for reading instruction in accordance with the requirements of section 1119. Providers of professional development must base training in reading instruction on scientifically based reading research. Professional development must be delivered by eligible providers and must address:
 - a. Information, instructional materials, programs, strategies and approaches based on scientifically based reading research, including early intervention, classroom reading materials, and remedial programs and approaches;
 - b. Instruction in the use of screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments and other procedures that effectively identify students who may be at risk for reading failure or who are having difficulty reading

5. **Evaluation strategies** – Collection and summary of valid and reliable data to document the effectiveness of Reading First in individual schools and in the LEA as a whole and to stimulate and accelerate improvement by identifying the schools that produce significant gains in reading achievement
6. **Reporting** – The LEA must report data for all students and categories of students described in the State’s Title I adequate yearly progress definition.
7. **Access to reading material** – Promotion of reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading material

There may be additional activities for which an LEA may use Reading First funds, provided they are based on scientifically based reading research and align with the LEA’s overall Reading First plan.

I-5. May programs or activities that are not based on scientifically based reading research be supported by Reading First funds?

No. All materials, programs, strategies, approaches and professional development activities supported by Reading First must be based on scientifically based reading research.

I-6. May a local educational agency use Reading First funds to cover costs for administrative expenses, technical assistance and evaluation activities?

Yes. An eligible local educational agency that receives a subgrant may use up to 3.5 percent of its Reading First funds for its own planning and administration purposes.

I-7. May pre-award costs be charged to the Reading First subgrant?

If a local educational agency incurs costs after receiving notification of its Reading First award but before the effective date of the award, these costs may be charged to the Reading First grant to the extent they would have been allowable if incurred after the award date. The LEA must receive written approval from the State educational agency.

I-8. May Reading First funds be used by a local educational agency for costs incurred after the subgrant period ends?

A local educational agency that receives a Reading First subgrant may only use Reading First funds for allowable costs during the subgrant award period. For example, an LEA is free to enter into a multi-year contract with a service provider; however, Reading First funds may only be used for allowable costs related to that contract that occur within the subgrant award period.

I-9. To what extent may waivers be sought to facilitate the implementation of a local educational agency Reading First program?

The Department will not grant any waiver that would undermine the intent and purposes of the Reading First program. Therefore, the Department will only consider waivers related to Reading First under limited and exceptional circumstances. In those instances, and consistent with the waiver provisions and limitations of section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a local educational agency that receives Reading First funds may apply to the Department for waivers of Reading First requirements, if the requirements sought to be waived impede the LEA's ability to carry out its Reading First program and the waiver would be consistent with the overall objective and structure of the program.

However, a local educational agency that receives Reading First funds may apply to the Department for waivers of requirements of other major Federal education programs, if the requirements sought to be waived impede the LEA's ability to carry out its Reading First program.

I-10. Does the Ed-Flex waiver authority apply to the Reading First program?

No. SEAs and LEAs seeking waivers of Reading First requirements must apply to the Department under the waiver authority in section 9401 of the ESEA. (See Question I-9.) The Department will not grant any waiver that would undermine the intent and purposes of the Reading First program.

I-11. When does the period of availability for FY 2002 Reading First funds end?

Grantees or subgrantees must obligate FY 2002 Reading First funds by September 30, 2004. The Department's regulations at 34 CFR 76.707 (available at: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCFO/grants/edgar/pt76g.html>) describe when an obligation occurs with respect to various categories of activities. The awarding of subgrants to LEAs does not constitute an obligation.

I-12. How long are Reading First funds available for obligation?

Reading First funds become available on July 1 of a given fiscal year and are initially available for obligation through September 30 of the succeeding fiscal year, a fifteen-month period. If unobligated funds remain after this initial period of availability, a State educational agency may carry over those funds, that remain available for obligation during an additional twelve-month period under the "Tydings amendment." For example, fiscal year 2002 Reading First funds become available on July 1, 2002. They are initially available for obligation through September 30, 2003; then, an SEA may carry over any unobligated funds and obligate them through September 30, 2004.

State educational agencies and local educational agencies must obligate funds during the period for which the funds are available for obligation. Please note that an obligation does not occur when an SEA makes a subgrant award to an LEA. Obligation of Reading First funds only occurs when they are committed to specific activities.

J. COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

J-1. How does Reading First fit with other Federal programs and initiatives that support reading instruction?

The explicit goal of the No Child Left Behind Act is to dramatically improve the achievement of students across the country. Reading First, the academic cornerstone of the No Child Left Behind Act, focuses attention on the most critical element of reaching this goal: ensuring that students know how to read well by the end of third grade. Through Reading First, States and local educational agencies can leverage funds from other Federal programs, particularly Title I, to improve reading instruction for all students. Although Reading First subgrants will only be available to targeted LEAs, State educational agencies will have a significant amount of funds available to provide statewide leadership and professional development in the application and expansion of scientifically based reading research to improve reading instruction. This State leadership supported by Reading First should coordinate and align the use of funds from other Federal programs that focus on improving reading achievement.

J-2. What is the relationship between Reading First and Early Reading First?

The goal of Early Reading First is to prepare children to enter kindergarten truly ready to learn to read, i.e., with the necessary skills for reading success. Early Reading First will focus its grants on proven programs with coherent skill-based instruction. Reading First K-3 classrooms are the preferred and most logical next step for eventual Early Reading First graduates, and the Department encourages SEAs and LEAs to coordinate their Early Reading First and Reading First activities.

J-3. How does Reading First coordinate with a Title I schoolwide plan or a Title I school improvement plan?

All Title I schools that operate schoolwide programs must implement a schoolwide plan. Title I “schoolwides” that receive Reading First subgrants will need to coordinate and integrate their Reading First activities with this plan. Reading First activities can help focus schoolwide plans on the critical goal of improving reading achievement. Title I schoolwides that receive Reading First subgrants must meet all the purposes of Reading First.

Similarly, all schools identified for improvement under Title I must implement a school improvement plan. Schools identified for improvement that receive Reading First subgrants must coordinate and integrate their Reading First activities with this plan and must meet all the purposes of Reading First.

K. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

K-1. Will technical assistance be available to State educational agencies in preparing their Reading First applications?

Yes. Extensive technical assistance will be available to State educational agencies that request assistance as they prepare their Reading First applications. The Department is currently contracting with entities with varied expertise and experience in applying scientifically based reading research to improve reading instruction to provide this support and assistance. The Department will contact SEAs directly with more information on this assistance.

K-2. What technical assistance will be provided to State educational agencies, local educational agencies and schools related to the implementation of Reading First?

An extensive network of technical assistance will be available to support the implementation of Reading First. The Department will contract with entities with experience and expertise related to the application of scientifically based reading research to improve reading instruction and achievement to provide support to State educational agencies. This technical assistance will be multi-faceted and will incorporate a variety of venues and approaches.

Much of this technical assistance will focus on building State capacity to implement Reading First and to support schools across the State as they implement programs and strategies to improve reading achievement that are based on scientifically based reading research. Through the Reading First program, States will have a significant amount of funds for their use in providing professional development and technical assistance to local educational agencies and schools.

In addition, monitoring of State implementation of Reading First will occur as a distinct activity within this network. The Department plans to monitor closely and hold States accountable for their implementation of Reading First and the progress they make in improving student achievement in reading.

K-3. In what other ways is the Federal government providing assistance and information to State educational agencies, local educational agencies and schools related to Reading First?

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), in collaboration with the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services and the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, will disseminate information on scientifically based reading research pertaining to children, youth and adults. NIFL will also identify and disseminate information about schools, local educational agencies and State educational agencies that have developed and implemented effective classroom reading programs that meet the requirements of Reading First.

NIFL will support the continued identification and dissemination of information on reading programs that contain the essential components of reading instruction as supported by scientifically based reading research that can lead to improved reading outcomes for children, youth, and adults. This will include information identified through the external evaluation and review processes of the Reading First program.

K-4. How can a local educational agency or school obtain information about reading programs based on scientifically based reading research?

Consumer guides will be identified that will provide information on reading programs based on scientifically based reading research. Additionally, there are various instruments that can provide criteria for assessing the quality of a particular reading program. These instruments provide methods to ascertain whether a program meets the requirements of scientifically based reading research, and whether it is a comprehensive, supplemental or intervention program.

Another publication with useful information is *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*. This publication can be ordered by contacting the National Institute for Literacy at ED Pubs at 1-800-228-8813 (phone), 301-430-1244 (fax) or EdPubOrders@aspensys.com. It is available online at: www.nifl.gov.

L. NATIONAL EVALUATION

L-1. What are the Department's plans for the national evaluation of Reading First?

The Department will contract with an independent external organization to coordinate and conduct a five-year, quantitative evaluation of the Reading First program. This rigorous, scientifically valid evaluation will be designed to

identify the effects of specific Reading First activities carried out by State educational agencies and local educational agencies on improving reading instruction and to take into account factors influencing student performance that are not controlled by teachers or educational administrators. The evaluation will include:

1. **Essential components of reading instruction** -- an analysis of the relationship between each of the essential components of reading instruction and overall reading proficiency
2. **Assessment tools** -- an analysis of whether the assessment tools used by SEAs and LEAs measure the essential components of reading instruction
3. **State reading standards** -- an analysis of how State reading standards correlate with the essential components of reading instruction
4. **Targeted assistance grants** -- an analysis of whether the receipt of a targeted assistance grant under section 1204 results in an increase in the number of children who read proficiently
5. **Instructional materials** -- A measurement of the extent to which specific instructional materials improve reading proficiency
6. **Identifying reading deficiencies** -- a measurement of the extent to which specific screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments assist teachers in identifying specific reading deficiencies
7. **Professional Development** -- a measurement of the extent to which professional development programs implemented by SEAs using Reading First funds improve reading instruction
8. **Pre-service preparation** -- a measurement of how well prepared students entering the teaching profession are to teach the essential components of reading instruction
9. **Student interest in reading** -- an analysis of changes in students' interest in reading and time spent reading outside of school
10. **Additional information** -- any other pertinent analysis or measurement as determined by the Secretary.

The national evaluation of the Reading First program will also examine the impact of Reading First on students' referral to and eligibility for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, based on difficulties learning to read.

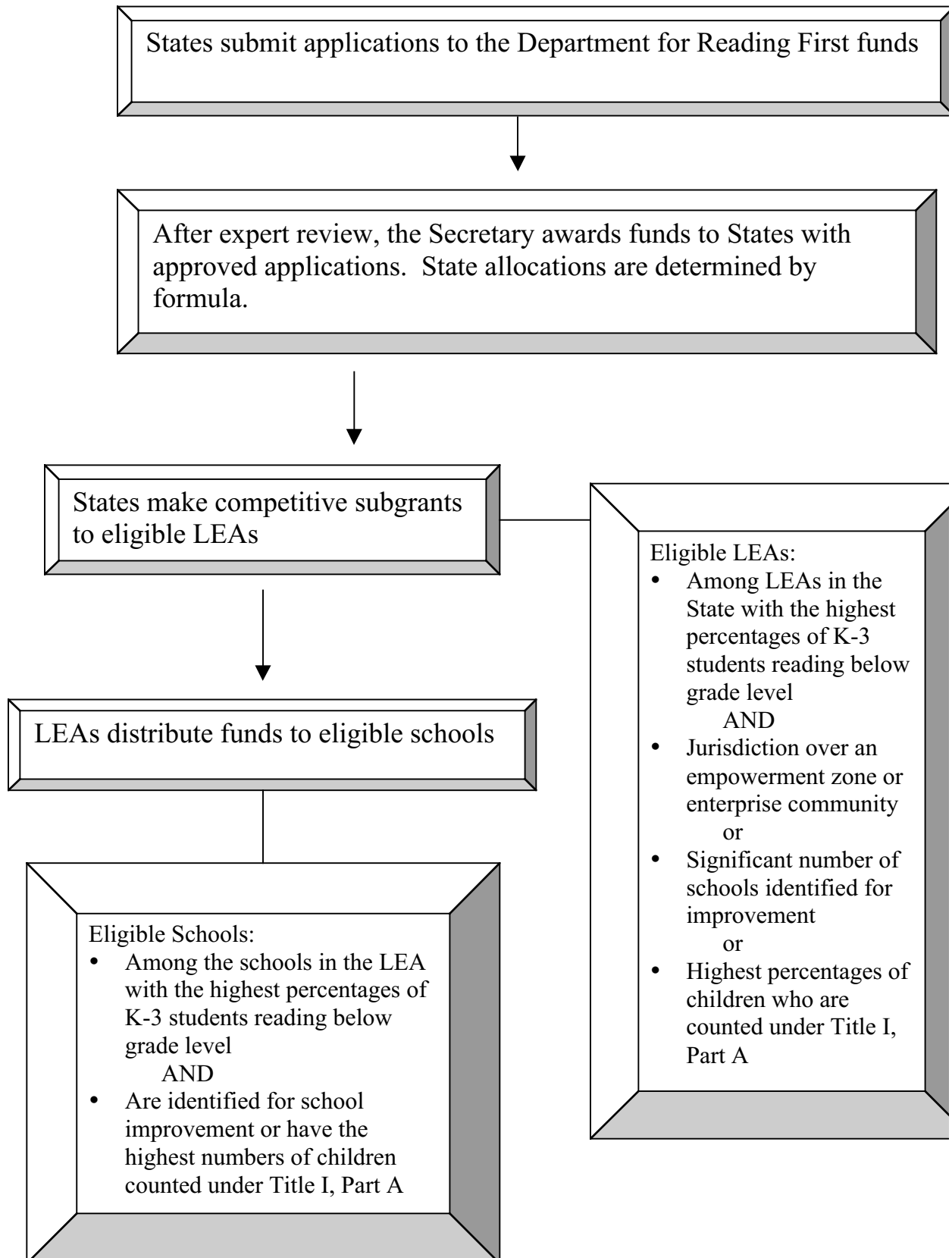
The Department will provide the findings of the national evaluation of the Reading First program to State educational agencies and local educational agencies on a periodic basis for their use in program improvement.

M. MISCELLANEOUS

M-1. What portions of the Education Department's General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) apply to Reading First?

The EDGAR provisions applicable to the Reading First program are Part 76 (State-Administered Programs), Part 77 (Definitions), Part 80 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments), Part 82 (New Restrictions on Lobbying) and Part 85 (Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)).

Appendix A --Flow of Reading First Funds



A SUMMARY OF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
ABOUT THE READING FIRST PROGRAM

**Reading First
Frequently Asked Questions
DRAFT
January 2002**

1. What's the current situation - how well are America's children reading?

Not nearly well enough. Educators, parents and other interested parties have long acknowledged the general deterioration of our students' overall reading achievement. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provides perhaps the best single glimpse into the nationwide problem. From NAEP, we get a basic picture of how well children read, and the picture is not encouraging. Approximately 40% of students across the nation cannot read at a basic level. And as disconcerting as this general situation is, specific sub-groups of students are experiencing even less success.

- Almost 70% of low-income fourth grade students cannot read at a basic level. In other words, these children struggle with foundational reading skills like summarizing and understanding a story.
- Almost half the students living in urban areas cannot read at a basic level.
- Average-performing students have made no progress over the last 10 years, and the lowest-performing readers have become less successful over this same time period.

From a national perspective these facts are deeply troubling, and cry out for a vigorous and coordinated effort by all those with a role and responsibility in educating our nation's children. Not being able to read at grade level is devastating to the nine-year old child who cannot do homework, enjoy a book or look forward to future grades with confidence and excitement.

2. What's the key to turning this situation around?

Encouragingly, these trends in reading failure can be broken. Schools and districts can and have overcome failure and made excellent progress with even the most difficult to educate children. Unfortunately, these islands of excellence are too few and far between. Yet we know that every single child - regardless of income level or home environment - can and must learn to read by the end of third grade; thus, it is in reading instruction from kindergarten through third grade where significant new federal support for states and districts is being focused.

Research has consistently identified the critical skills that young students need to become good readers. Teachers across different states and districts have demonstrated that sound, scientifically based reading instruction can and does work with all children. The critical missing piece lies in helping able teachers benefit from the relevant research in each and every classroom. Real, nationwide progress can be made when we bring together proven methods with significant new federal resources to make sure that every child becomes a successful reader, and that each child moves forward well prepared for a rich and rewarding academic experience.

3. Why is it so important for children to read better, so early in school?

Countless new doors are opened when children become good readers early in life. Research shows that children who read well in the early grades are far more successful in later years, which only confirms our own intuition. Young, capable readers can take greater advantage of school opportunities, and develop invaluable confidence in their own abilities. Plus, reading success leads directly to success in other subjects such as social studies, math, and science. In the long term, students who cannot read well are much more likely to drop out of school and be limited to lower-paying jobs throughout their lifetimes. Reading is undeniably the foundation for success in society. Reading must come first, and focused, federal initiatives will provide effective and meaningful support to states and districts in their crucial efforts to make all children successful, fluent readers by the end of third grade.

4. Whose responsibility is it to help children become successful early readers?

Parents, clearly, are our children's first reading teachers. From birth to the time children enter school, parents can build an important foundation for reading success. But once a child enters school, teachers and principals assume the primary responsibility for teaching children to read, regardless of how well parents have done their part in this foundation building. In fact, the most important mission for elementary teachers across the nation is to ensure that every child can read in light of the varying foundations with which our children begin their formal academic careers. All children rely on their teachers to learn and grow; children with less support at home rely on their teachers the most. All teachers must therefore be supported, and teachers of the poorest readers need to be supported the most.

Children may learn about the purposes of reading from a wide range of neighborhood and community resources. Libraries, community groups, faith-based organizations, and other associations each contribute in important ways to students' literacy skills. These people can and should provide many successful and enjoyable opportunities for students to read. While this support is critical, many students will not become successful readers unless classroom reading instruction meets the highest standards. For this reason, the quality and effective delivery of reading instruction sit atop the list of all elementary school goals.

5. What is being done to help children learn to read well by third grade?

America's reading problem is serious, but there are good reasons to be optimistic about the future.

First, improving the reading skills of children is a top national and state priority. The President, the First Lady, the Secretary of Education, governors, business leaders, elected officials, citizens, community organizations, parents and teachers are deeply committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure that every child can read. This is just the type of deep commitment and collegial cooperation that will be needed to best address this challenge.

Second, researchers and educators have come to a constructive consensus about reading instruction and the critical skills children must learn to be successful readers. Particularly

at this point in history, science has provided tremendous insight into exactly how children learn to read, and related research has identified the most essential components of reading instruction.

Lastly, grassroots efforts to focus on this problem are springing up across the nation. Local schools, districts and state educational agencies have already started to improve reading instruction. Significant new federal funds and support are being made available to support, enhance and expand these state and local efforts.

6. What is Reading First exactly, and what are its specific goals?

Reading First is a bold, new national initiative squarely aimed at helping every child in every state become a successful reader. For this purpose, up to nearly \$5 billion will be distributed among the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and outlying areas over the next several years. These funds are specifically dedicated to helping states and local school districts establish high-quality, comprehensive reading instruction for all children in kindergarten through third grade.

Reading First acknowledges that high quality reading instruction is a national goal, but a local responsibility. To achieve this goal, classroom reading instruction must reflect effective practices, and localities will need help in getting all classrooms there. Reading First grants will support programs and proposals that are based upon the evidence on how children learn to read.

Under this ambitious initiative, the entire nation has high expectations for results. As ever, it will be left to the teachers, principals, and educators to apply the research and meet those expectations for all children. Reading First funds and support will help these professionals every step of the way.

7. What's different about Reading First?

Reading First, unlike previous national reading programs, is a classroom-focused nationwide effort designed to help each and every student become a successful reader. Every state will be eligible to apply, and the most needy schools and districts will receive the funds and other support they will need to succeed.

Second, the size and scope of the program are much larger than previous programs. We cannot acknowledge the depth of the problem without making available the support and expertise required to ensure reading success for all students.

Moreover, Reading First differs from earlier initiatives by establishing clear, specific expectations for what can and should happen for all students. Reading First specifies that teachers' classroom instructional decisions must be informed by scientifically based reading research. Through Reading First funds, grants will be available for state and local programs in which students are systematically and explicitly taught five key early reading skills:

- Phonemic awareness - the ability to hear, identify, and play with individual sounds - or phonemes - in spoken words.
- Phonics - the relationship between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language.

- Fluency - the capacity to read text accurately and quickly.
- Vocabulary - the words students must know to communicate effectively.
- Comprehension - the ability to understand and gain meaning from what has been read.

Reading First appropriately concentrates attention on the classroom. After all, during the average school day, students spend most of their time in classrooms. Classroom instructional time should reflect the most accurate and up-to-date knowledge about the science of teaching children how to read. For that reason, Reading First provides funds to state and local districts to help classroom teachers improve the reading instruction they deliver to all of their children.

8. Does this mean that there's only one good way to teach early reading?

No, there are a variety of successful methods to teach early reading, but they share a common understanding of and commitment to the five key skills outlined above. There are better ways - and worse ways - to perform most sophisticated, multi-faceted tasks, and teaching reading is no different. But teaching reading is too important and too complex not to equip our teachers with the best methods and best training for their crucial task.

9. How will Reading First help classroom teachers?

Reading First will help teachers in a variety of ways, ways suggested by teachers, for teachers. While promoting and supporting good teaching is clearly at the core of Reading First, different teachers will naturally have different, specific support needs. Rather than blaming teachers for lackluster results, Reading First will dramatically increase support for reading teachers and help remove obstacles that keep children from becoming proficient readers.

States will ensure that primary grade teachers deliver reading instruction that is informed by scientifically based reading research. For those teachers in schools and districts with the greatest need, Reading First funds may be used to organize additional professional development, purchase or develop high-quality instructional materials, or administer assessments or diagnostic instruments. Whatever the approach or specific need(s), the common goal is to make sure that teachers have all the necessary tools to provide coherent, skills-based reading instruction for all of their children.

10. How will Reading First work in the immediate term?

Every state has the potential to receive significant funding very soon to improve reading achievement. Awards for Reading First will follow a straightforward, two-step process. First, each state can apply for Reading First money on the basis of how many low-income children live within the state. States with approved applications will use their funds to organize a professional development program for all kindergarten through third grade teachers, as well as in a variety of other ways, as outlined by states in their proposals. States will also provide ongoing, focused technical assistance to local schools for improving reading instruction.

The bulk of these funds, however, will go to districts and schools to meet students' instructional needs. Districts with the greatest needs will compete for the majority of the funds in state-run competitions. States will give priority to districts with high rates of poverty and reading failure. Once funds reach the local district, the Reading First monies are flexible and can be used for assessments to diagnose problems and monitor progress, professional development, reading materials, and ongoing support to improve the delivery of effective reading instruction.

11. What are the short and medium-term expectations of Reading First?

Students are expected to become better readers. Teachers are expected to deliver consistent and coherent, skills-based reading instruction. District and state leaders are expected to provide educators with ongoing, high-quality support that makes a difference in the classroom. Reading First contributes to these high expectations by steadfastly supporting high-quality local and state reading initiatives with the funds need to make real improvements.

12. How will we know if Reading First is working?

Quite simply, Reading First will be working when every child in our country becomes a successful and proficient reader, irrespective of economic circumstances or family background. Further, these efforts work when every child can read and understand a mathematics problem, social studies textbook, or science experiment because of a firm reading foundation established in early elementary years through well-delivered, good instruction. These efforts work when every child is ready for unlimited success and achievement in the later grades because every child learned to read in the early grades.

A POWERPOINT PRESENTATION ON EARLY
READING FIRST

Early Reading First



Reading First and Early Reading First

The ultimate goal of Early Reading First is to close the achievement gap by preventing reading difficulties.



Title I, Part B, Subpart 2, NCLB

Authorizes the Secretary to make competitive awards for up to six years to support local efforts to enhance the early language and pre-reading skills of preschool age children through strategies and professional development based on scientifically based reading research.

Reading First

- States apply to ED
- States award subgrants to local applicants (State competitions)
- \$900 million (FY 2002)
- Grades K-3

Early Reading First

- Local projects apply directly to ED
- ED awards grants to local applicants (national competition)
- \$75 million (FY 2002)
- Preschool age

We know that:

Literacy is a learned skill, not a biological awakening.

Children need coherent, intentional instruction in the preschool years.

Young children need to be challenged to the edge of their competencies.

Knowledge and content have an important role in developing language, cognition, and early reading skills.

What Early Reading First is not:

Academic trickle down

Teaching three year olds to read

Ignoring social-emotional development or health and safety.

De-emphasizing play




Children who are most at risk for school failure benefit the most from high-quality early learning experiences, yet they are the least likely to have access to programs providing these experiences.





Purpose 1: To enhance children's language, cognitive, and early reading skills through professional development for teachers.

- Explicit, systematic, scaffolded instruction
- Intentional teaching
- Intellectually engaging curriculum
- Daily book reading
- Progress monitoring



Purpose 2: To demonstrate language and reading activities developed from scientifically based reading research.

- Oral language (vocabulary development, expressive language, and listening comprehension)
- Phonological awareness (rhyming, blending, and segmenting)
- Print awareness
- Alphabetic knowledge



Purpose 3: To provide preschool age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and literacy rich environments

- Large variety of age-appropriate books
- Alphabet at children's eye level
- Labels, signs, and environmental print
- Displays of children's drawings and writing
- Readily available writing tools
- Many opportunities for conversation



Purpose 4: To use screening assessments to effectively identify preschool children who may be at risk for reading failure.

Are:

- Brief
- Valid and reliable
- Easy to use and interpret
- Individually administered
- Used to identify children at-risk of later failure
- Ongoing

Are NOT

- Lengthy
- Difficult to administer
- Group-administered
- Used to track children
- One time only

Purpose 5: To improve existing early childhood programs by using scientifically based reading research to improve all aspects of the program.

Instructional
Materials

Teaching
strategies

Parent
Engagement

Curriculum

Professional
Development

Parent Engagement

The quality of parent-child interactions and family environments are central to the acquisition of children's language, cognitive, and early reading development.



Research in Early Reading

Preventing Reading Difficulties
National Research Council

Starting Out Right
National Research Council

Learning to Read and Write
Neuman, Copple, and Bredekamp

Appropriation -- \$75 million

Approximate number of grants -- 175

Estimated range -- \$250,000-\$1.5 mil

Project period -- Not to exceed three yrs.

Eligible Applicants

1. One or more LEAs eligible for Reading First.
2. One or more public or private organizations or agencies located in a community served by an LEA eligible for Reading First, applying on behalf of one or more early education programs.
3. One or more eligible LEAs collaborating with one or more eligible organizations or agencies.

Review Process

Pro-application – concept paper

Fully developed application (for invited applicants)

Possible site visit

Awards expected to be made in December 2002

Estimated Timeline

Applications available	March 30, 2002
Pre-application due	Mid May 2002
Invitation for full application	End June 2002
Full applications due	End August 2002
Possible site visit	Oct./Nov. 2002
Grants awarded	December 2002

National Evaluation

The Secretary shall conduct an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of Early Reading First—

- Interim report due to Congress, Oct. 1, 2004
- Final report due to Congress, Sept. 30, 2006

Early Reading First uses scientifically based reading research to

- Improve the quality of instruction
- Improve the curriculum and materials
- Improve the classroom environment

to create centers of excellence.

GUIDANCE PREPARED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION FOR THE PREPARATION OF EARLY
READING FIRST APPLICATIONS, INCLUDING
ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

DRAFT GUIDANCE

for the

**EARLY READING FIRST
PROGRAM**

**Subpart B, Part B, Title I of the
Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)
as amended by
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. Introduction and Program Purpose

- A-1. What is the purpose of the Early Reading First Program?**
- A-2. How do the other developmental domains for young children fit into Early Reading First?**
- A-3. What is the relationship between Early Reading First and other federally funded education programs for preschool age children, particularly Title I preschools, Head Start, and family literacy programs such as Even Start?**
- A-4. What legislation authorizes Early Reading First?**
- A-5. What is the relationship between Early Reading First and Reading First?**

B. Developing an Effective Early Reading First Program

- B-1. What language, cognitive, and early reading skills are important for preschool age children?**
- B-2. What strategies and professional development, based on scientifically based reading research, can you use to enhance the language, cognitive and early reading development of preschool age children?**
- B-3. What is scientifically based reading research?**
- B-4. Where can I find research and research-based resources about young children's language, cognitive, and early reading development?**

C. Award Process and Funding

- C-1. What process will the Department use to award Early Reading First grants?**
- C-2. How much money is available for Early Reading First?**
- C-3. What is the size of Early Reading First grants?**
- C-4. What length are Early Reading First grants?**
- C-5. When will the Department award Early Reading First grants?**
- C-6. When will Early Reading First pre-applications and full applications be due?**
- C-7. How can I obtain an application package?**
- C-8. How can I find out more about the Department of Education's general grant process?**

- C-9. How does an applicant obtain funding after the first year for Early Reading First?**

D. Applicant Eligibility

- D-1. What entities can apply for Early Reading First grants?**
D-2. What is an eligible local educational agency (LEA)?
D-3. What public and private organizations or agencies can apply for an Early Reading First grant?
D-4. May several eligible LEAs and organizations apply in collaboration with one another?
D-5. Are public charter schools eligible to apply for an Early Reading First grant?
D-6. Are Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools eligible to apply for an Early Reading First grant?

E. Program Activities and Design

- E-1. What activities must a grantee provide with Early Reading First funds?**
E-2. What children may participate in an Early Reading First program?
E-3. What staff may participate in an Early Reading First program?
E-4. May Early Reading First programs provide parenting education and other services supporting parents' engagement in their preschool children's education?
E-5. How can an Early Reading First project help sustain the learning gains of preschool age children when the children enter elementary school?
E-6. May a grantee provide teacher stipends, bonuses, or scholarships with Early Reading First funds?
E-7. May a grantee use Early Reading First funds to change the preschool physical environment?
E-8. May a grantee subgrant Early Reading First funds?
E-9. May a grantee use Early Reading First funds for the indirect costs of the program?
E-10. How can a grantee determine what specific cost items are allowable to charge to its Federal funds?

F. Miscellaneous

- F-1. What portions of the Education Department**

**General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR)
apply to the Early Reading First program?**

- F-2. Will there be a national evaluation of Early Reading First?**

A. INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM PURPOSE

A-1. What is the purpose of the Early Reading First Program?

The overall purpose of the Early Reading First Program is to prepare preschool age children to enter kindergarten with the language, cognitive, and early reading skills necessary for reading success, thereby preventing later reading difficulties. Early Reading First will transform early childhood programs into centers of excellence that provide a high-quality education to preschool age children, especially those children from low-income families.

Early Reading First enables preschool programs to do what scientifically based research shows is the most effective way to reach this goal. Classroom environments will be rich in age-appropriate print, from sources such as books, labeling, and posting the alphabet and children's work in pre-writing. Teachers will deliver intentional and explicit instruction and conduct progress monitoring to determine which skills children are learning. Programs will provide intensive and ongoing professional development that includes mentoring and coaching in the classroom. These are just a few examples of how Early Reading First is designed to make a dramatic improvement in the ways we teach our preschool age children and prepare them for future school success.

The specific purposes of the Early Reading First program are as follows:

- To support local efforts to enhance the early language, literacy, and early reading development of preschool age children, particularly those from low-income families, through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research.
- To provide preschool age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and literature-rich environments so that they can attain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond.
- To demonstrate language and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research that supports the age-appropriate development of --
 - *oral language* (vocabulary development, expressive language, and listening comprehension);
 - *phonological awareness* (rhyming, blending, segmenting)
 - *print awareness*; and
 - *alphabet knowledge* (letter recognition).

- To use screening assessments to effectively identify preschool age children who may be at risk for reading failure.

A-2. How do the other developmental domains for young children fit into Early Reading First?

It is vital that preschool programs attend to all the developmental domains of early childhood. The developmental domains (social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and physical) are closely related, and growth in language and cognition will optimally occur in the context of the other areas of development. Language development emerges from social interactions and rich experiences, good health and nutrition are foundations for all types of learning, and self-assurance in a group setting helps children profit from school experiences.

Early Reading First, however, emphasizes cognitive and language development. Early care and education programs have long done a good job in addressing the social, emotional, and health needs of children and families. However, new research points to the importance of the language and cognitive domains, which programs often have not strongly or systematically addressed. This research illustrates the intellectual competencies of young children and specific ways to support learning such as through explicit and “scaffolded” instruction. Scaffolding refers to instruction in which adults build upon what children already know to help them accomplish a complex task by breaking it down into simpler components. An extensive body of evidence is also now available pointing to the necessity of developing early reading skills such as phonological awareness and vocabulary. Early Reading First is designed to improve the language, cognitive, and early reading skills of preschool age children in the context of the other developmental domains, all of which need strong and consistent attention.

A-3. What is the relationship between Early Reading First and other federally funded education programs for preschool age children, particularly Title I preschools, Head Start, and family literacy programs such as Even Start?

Early Reading First is designed to transform existing early education programs, such as Title I preschools, child care agencies and programs, Head Start centers, and family literacy programs, such as Even Start, into centers of early learning excellence that will result in preschool age children developing the early language and cognitive skills they need to enter school ready to read. Early Reading First will provide the opportunity for these preschool programs to change the classroom environment, provide professional development for staff in scientific reading research-based instruction, support preschool age children’s language and

cognitive development, and use screening assessments and progress monitoring to identify and work with preschool children who may be at risk for reading failure.

A-4. What legislation authorizes Early Reading First?

Early Reading First is a new program authorized under Subpart 2, Part B, Title I of the ESEA, as enacted by the No Child Left Behind Act, 2001, Public Law 107-110. Early Reading First complements another new key reading program, Reading First (Subpart 1, Part B, Title I, ESEA), which helps states and school districts to implement programs and strategies scientifically proven to be effective in helping school age children (K-3) learn to read.

A-5. What is the relationship between Early Reading First and Reading First?

Reading First is designed to improve reading instruction in grades kindergarten through third grade. Early Reading First is designed to improve existing programs for preschool age children. Reading First is a large formula grant to states, with competitive subgrants at the local level. Early Reading First is a smaller program under which the Department makes competitive discretionary grants at the local level. Applicants that receive an Early Reading First grant from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for one or more preschool programs, and later also receive a Reading First subgrant from their State for reading programs for school age children, must coordinate their Early Reading First activities with their Reading First activities to ensure continuity between preschool and kindergarten through grade 3.

**B. DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE
EARLY READING FIRST PROGRAM**

B-1. What language, cognitive, and early reading skills are important for preschool age children?

Scientifically based reading research shows that it is important for preschool age children to acquire the following language, cognitive, and early reading skills for continued school success:

1. **Phonological Awareness:** Includes –
 - (1) identifying and making oral rhymes;
 - (2) identifying and working with syllables in spoken words through segmenting and blending;

- (3) identifying and working with “onsets” (all the sounds of a word that come before the first vowel) and “rimes” (the first vowel in a word and all the sounds that follow) in spoken syllables;
- (4) identifying and working with individual sounds in spoken words.
- 2. **Oral Language:** Development of expressive and receptive spoken language, including vocabulary, the contextual use of speech and syntax, and oral comprehension abilities.
- 3. **Print Awareness:** Knowledge of the purposes and conventions of print.
- 4. **Alphabet Knowledge:** Letter recognition.

B-2. What strategies and professional development, based on scientifically based reading research, can you use to enhance the language, cognitive, and early reading development of preschool age children?

Research shows that the following strategies and activities, required by Early Reading First, are effective in developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills of young children:

⇒ *A high-quality oral language and literacy-rich environment.* A high-quality oral language environment includes adults reading books aloud to children, asking children, for example, to predict what might happen next in the book, and asking children predictive and analytic questions that help them analyze the story. Adults use rich and varied vocabulary and provide children frequent opportunities during all activities to ask and answer questions. Teachers engage children in conversation and use linguistic awareness games, such as songs and nursery rhymes, and rhythmic activities that are focused on phonological awareness to help develop children’s oral language skills.

A high-quality print-rich environment includes access to print in a variety of forms. The alphabet is posted at an eye level appropriate for young children, and items in the classroom are labeled. The classroom contains a variety of attractive and age-appropriate books easily accessible to young children, including storybooks and non-fiction books, for them to look at and hold and for adults to read aloud. Children are given opportunities to express themselves on paper without being limited to using correct spelling and proper handwriting, to help them understand that writing has real purpose. Teachers post children’s work around the classroom, as well as posting “environmental print” (print from familiar objects children may see at home and in the community). The classroom contains objects that children can manipulate into letters and words as an engaging way to provide children with the opportunity to explore letters and print.

⇒ *Providing professional development to staff that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of early language and reading*

development. Professional development is provided on a continuous, ongoing basis, and is sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused. Effective professional development includes strategies such as mentoring and coaching (e.g., demonstration by the coach of effective strategies, and coaches' observation of teachers' instruction followed by discussion and reflection on the effectiveness of instructional strategies and how they support student progress).

- ⇒ Teachers identify and provide activities and instructional materials based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing children's language, cognitive, and early reading skills. Teachers organize and present these materials in a systematic, coherent manner. Teachers prepare monthly, weekly, and daily lesson plans by referring to a scope and sequence that outlines the academic goals for the year. Curricula are intellectually engaging, have meaningful content, and provide multiple opportunities for developing language and cognitive skills, including the use of explicit instruction. Teaching is intentional, meaning that the teacher is focused upon the skills that a child is developing while engaged in any activity.
- ⇒ Teachers use screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures and progress monitoring based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool age children are developing the cognitive skills they need for later reading success. Screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures are critical for evaluating student progress and determining whether children are developing language and literacy skills necessary for continued school success. Teachers receive training in how to use these screening assessments. Teachers administer screening assessments or other measures on a regular basis, embedded in instruction as appropriate, to determine progress and identify cognitive development problems. Teachers also use these assessments to tailor a plan of instruction to the needs of individual students, using learning and instructional strategies and activities that build on the skills of that student (scaffolding instruction).
- ⇒ The preschool program integrates the instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures described above into the overall early childhood education program offered. It is important to provide high-quality professional development and to identify materials, activities, and assessments based on scientific reading research. The process is not complete, however, until teachers begin to demonstrate their new competencies in working with children and they incorporate those materials, activities, and assessments into the everyday operation of the preschool program.

B-3. What is scientifically based reading research?

Scientifically based reading research is research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid and reliable knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties. This research:

1. Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
2. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
3. Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
4. Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

B-4. Where can I find research and research-based resources about young children's language, cognitive, and early reading development?

Appendix B provides research and research-based resources on the language, cognitive, and early reading development of young children.

C. AWARD PROCESS AND FUNDING

C-1. What process will the Department use to award Early Reading First grants?

The Department will award Early Reading First grants on a competitive basis to eligible applicants, based on the quality of the applications, the recommendations of a peer review panel, and criteria in section 75.217 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). In selecting award recipients, the Department will use a two-phase system that will include a pre-application and a full application.

All applicants will submit pre-applications that briefly address certain key concepts described in the application package. A panel of experts will evaluate the pre-applications based on pre-application selection criteria included in that package. The Department will invite to file full applications only those applicants that have pre-applications rated highly by the experts and are deemed by them to have substantial potential to become successful projects.

Applicants that are invited to file full applications will respond to more specific selection criteria for full applications described in the application package. A panel of experts will evaluate the full applications against the full-application selection criteria. The Department will base its funding decisions on the quality of the full applications, the recommendations of the expert panel, and the criteria in section 75.217 of EDGAR. The Department may use on-site visits in selecting applicants for funding.

C-2. How much money is available for Early Reading First?

The Congress appropriated \$75 million for the first year of the programs (fiscal year 2002).

C-3. What is the size of Early Reading First grants?

The Department anticipates funding about 175 grants, ranging between \$250,000 and \$1.5 million each per year. The size of each grant will depend on the size of the preschool program or programs being served. For years after FY 2002, the funding for continuation awards is contingent on appropriations for the program.

C-4. What length are Early Reading First grants?

An applicant may propose activities for a project period of up to 6 years.

C-5. When will the Department award Early Reading First grants?

The Department anticipates making Early Reading First grant awards in December 2002.

C-6. When will Early Reading First pre-applications and full applications be due?

The Department expects that the deadline for submitting Early Reading First pre-applications will be mid-May, 2002. The anticipated submission deadline for applicants invited to submit full applications is mid-August, 2002.

C-7. How can I obtain an application package?

The Department expects that the Early Reading First application package will be available by March 30, 2002. The Department will publish a Notice of Application Availability (closing date notice) for Early Reading First in the *Federal Register* on or about that date. Applications then will be available in hard copy by contacting the Department at ERF@ed.gov, and through the Early Reading First web site at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/earlyreading>.

C-8. How can I find out more about the Department of Education's general grant process?

For general information about the Department's competitive grant process see "What Should I Know About ED Grants," available at: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/KnowAbtGrants/>.

C-9. How does an applicant obtain funding after the first year for Early Reading First?

Subject to the availability of appropriated funds, the Department makes continuation awards for each budget period after the first year if the grantee has demonstrated that it has made substantial progress toward meeting the objectives in its approved application (or has obtained the Department's approval of no-cost changes in the project that will enable the grantee to meet these objectives), if the grantee has submitted a satisfactory performance report, and if continuing the project is in the best interest of the Federal Government.

Early Reading First annual performance reports must include, at a minimum, a description of the following:

- the research-based instruction, materials, and activities used in the preschool programs supported with funds under the grant;
- the types of preschool programs supported with funds under the grant and the number and ages of children served by those programs;
- the number and qualifications of the program staff who provide early literacy instruction under those preschool programs and the type of ongoing professional development provided to that staff; and
- the results of the grantee's evaluation of the success of the activities supported with Early Reading First funds in enhancing the early language, literacy, and cognitive development of preschool age children served by the project.

D. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

D-1. What entities can apply for Early Reading First grants?

The following are eligible to apply for an Early Reading First grant:

- (1) One or more local educational agencies (LEAs) that are eligible to receive a Reading First subgrant.
- (2) One or more public or private organizations or agencies, acting on behalf of one or more programs that serve preschool age children (such as a Head Start program, a child care program, an Even Start family literacy program, or a lab school at a university), which organizations or agencies are located in a community served by an LEA that is eligible for a Reading First grant.
- (3) One or more LEAs described in (1) above, in collaboration with one or more organizations or agencies described in (2) above.

D-2. What is an eligible local educational agency (LEA)?

An LEA is eligible to apply for an Early Reading First grant if it meets the basic eligibility criteria for a Reading First subgrant. However, Early Reading First applications will be due before States have approved Reading First applications identifying eligible LEAs. Therefore, for the Early Reading First competition for FY 2002, the Department will provide a list of eligible LEAs on the Early Reading First website at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/earlyreading>. The Department anticipates that this list will be available around March 30, 2002, when applications become available.

D-3. What public and private organizations or agencies can apply for an Early Reading First grant?

Public and private organizations or agencies that are located in a community served by an LEA eligible for a Reading First subgrant may apply on behalf of one or more programs (including their own program) that serve preschool age children, such as a Head Start, an Even Start family literacy program, or a lab school at a university. For the FY 2002 Early Reading First competition, the Department will identify eligible LEAs as described above.

A State-level organization or agency, such as a State educational agency or State childcare agency, qualifies as a public organization that may apply on behalf of one or more preschool programs in the State, if the State-level organization or

agency is located in a community served by an LEA that is eligible for a Reading First subgrant. The Department strongly encourages organizations or agencies to apply on behalf of no more than five (5) preschool programs, to ensure that sufficient funds are available to develop each program into a center of excellence that succeeds in preparing preschool age, at-risk children for continued school achievement.

D-4. May several eligible LEAs and organizations apply in collaboration with one another?

Yes. The Secretary encourages joint applications between one or more eligible LEAs and one or more eligible public or private agencies or organizations.

D-5. Are public charter schools eligible to apply for an Early Reading First grant?

Under State law, public charter schools are generally either local educational agencies or public schools within an LEA. If a charter school is considered to be an LEA in the State, the public charter school is eligible for Early Reading First support on the same basis as other LEAs (that is, the charter school must qualify as an eligible organization under Reading First). As indicated above, for the FY 2002 Early Reading First competition, the Department will identify these eligible LEAs in each State. If a charter school is not considered to be an LEA under State law, then it may qualify as an eligible public organization if it meets the requirements for an eligible public organization described above. For years after FY 2002, Early Reading First will use the eligible LEAs identified for Reading First, if possible.

D-6. Are Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools eligible to apply for an Early Reading First grant?

A BIA-funded or BIA-operated school is eligible to apply for an Early Reading First grant if it qualifies as an LEA under section 9101(26) of the ESEA and meets the LEA eligibility requirements under Reading First. As indicated above, for the FY 2002 Early Reading First competition, the Secretary will identify these eligible LEAs in each State.

E. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND DESIGN

E-1. What activities must a grantee provide with Early Reading First funds?

A grantee must use the funds to:

1. Provide preschool age children with high-quality oral language and literature-rich environments in which to acquire language and cognitive skills.
2. Provide professional development that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of early language and reading development for the staff of the eligible applicant and that will assist in developing the preschool age children's –
 - A. oral language (vocabulary, expressive language, and listening comprehension);
 - B. phonological awareness (rhyming, blending, and segmenting);
 - C. print awareness (knowledge of the purposes and conventions of print); and
 - D. alphabet knowledge (letter recognition).
3. Identify and provide activities and instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing the skills and abilities described in subparagraph (2).
4. Acquire, provide training for, and implement screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures that are based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool age children are developing the early language and cognitive skills they need for later reading success.
5. Integrate the above instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures into the applicant's preschool programs.

E-2. What children may participate in an Early Reading First program?

Early Reading First programs are intended to serve preschool age children primarily from low-income families.

E-3. What staff may participate in an Early Reading First program?

Early Reading First projects should provide professional development to the staff of the preschool programs for which funding is received. In addition, the Department strongly encourages Early Reading First programs to work closely with staff in the elementary grades through such activities as joint training and professional development to ensure continuity of instruction and curriculum and consistency with State content standards.

E-4. May Early Reading First programs provide parenting education and other services supporting parents' engagement in their preschool children's education?

Yes. The quality of family environments and parent-child interactions is central to a child's literacy development and education. Parents strengthen their child's literacy development and school-related competencies when they engage in language-rich parent-child interaction, provide support for literacy in the family, and hold appropriate expectations of the child's learning and development. The Department strongly encourages Early Reading First programs to provide parents with educational training in those parenting skills most closely associated with children's language and cognitive development.

In addition, program staff are encouraged to meet with parents to talk about any areas in which their child is experiencing difficulty, and the early language and cognitive activities the parent can do at home to help prepare their child for formal school instruction. Program staff should work with parents to develop a plan to consistently reinforce crucial oral language and cognitive skills during summer or other extended vacation periods between preschool and kindergarten, which will help prevent the loss of previously acquired skills.

E-5. How can an Early Reading First project help sustain the learning gains of preschool age children when the children enter elementary school?

The Department strongly encourages Early Reading First programs to have a specific plan for establishing continuity with the instructional program in the elementary grades that facilitates the transition from the preschool to kindergarten. Providing information on children's preschool experience, and, on areas of concern for a particular child, if any, can help ensure that the proper supports continue to be provided as the children begin formal schooling.

If an applicant receives an Early Reading First grant for a preschool program and also receives a Reading First subgrant from their State for school-age children, activities must be coordinated to ensure continuity. For example, for children who are having particular difficulty with spoken language or cognitive skills upon entrance to kindergarten, the preschool teacher should provide the kindergarten teacher with the child's history, which would likely include documentation of how the child has progressed toward his or her program goals, and a discussion of areas where the child still is experiencing difficulty.

E-6. May a grantee provide teacher stipends, bonuses, or scholarships with Early Reading First funds?

Yes. The Department strongly supports the use of reasonable and necessary incentives to encourage the full participation of staff in such activities as professional development. The Department also urges Early Reading First projects to consider conducting professional development activities during the school day, by using paid, trained substitutes to free up the instructors to participate in the professional development. This approach emphasizes the importance of the professional development and ensures the full engagement of staff.

E-7. May a grantee use Early Reading First grant funds to change the preschool physical environment?

Yes. Early Reading First funds may be used for the reasonable and necessary costs associated with minor remodeling or alterations of classroom space to enhance early language and cognitive development activities. For example, funds may be used to create a separate reading center or “library” area, as long as there are no structural alterations to the building. However, Early Reading First funds may not be used to make structural alterations (such as by moving walls), for construction, or for building maintenance or repairs.

E-8. May a grantee subgrant Early Reading First funds?

No. However, grantees may award contracts with Early Reading First funds for program services and activities.

E-9. May a grantee use Early Reading First funds for the indirect costs of the program?

Yes. Applicants may apply the unrestricted indirect cost rate to the Early Reading First program.

E-10. How can a grantee determine the specific cost items it may charge to its Federal funds?

Applicants should refer to the Early Reading First statute and the following OMB Cost Principles in determining which specific cost items are allowable when preparing their proposed budgets:

- LEAs, State and Local Governments, Indian Tribes and Tribal Organizations, and Public Nonprofit Organizations (other than hospitals or institutions of higher education): OMB Circular A-87.
- Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs): OMB Circular A-21.
- Private nonprofit organizations (other than hospitals, institutions of higher education, and commercial organizations): OMB Circular A-122.

These OMB Cost Principles are available on the internet at
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/circulars>.

F. MISCELLANEOUS

F-1. What portions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) apply to the Early Reading First program?

The following portions of EDGAR (available electronically at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCFO/grants/edgar.html>) are applicable as indicated below:

- Part 74 – Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations (for applicants/grantees that are institutions of higher education or non-profit organizations)
- Part 75 – Direct Grant Programs (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 77 – Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 79 – Intergovernmental Review of Department of Education Programs and Activities (for all applicants/grantees except federally recognized Indian tribes)
- Part 80 – Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments (for applicants/grantees that are States or local governments such as local educational agencies)
- Part 81 – General Education Provisions Act – Enforcement (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 82 – New Restrictions on Lobbying (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 85 – Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) (for all applicants/grantees), and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-free Workplace (for applicants/grantees that are institutions of higher education)

- Part 86 – Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 97 – Protection of Human Subjects (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 98 – Student Rights in Research, Experimental Programs, and Testing (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 99 – Family Educational Rights and Privacy (for all applicants/grantees)

F-2. Will there be a national evaluation of Early Reading First?

Yes. The statute provides \$3 million for the purposes of conducting an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. Grantees are required to cooperate in this national evaluation.

Early Reading First Eligibility
Subpart 2, Part B, Title I
Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

Under the Early Reading First Program, \$75 million is available for direct competitive grants from the Department to local educational agencies (LEAs or school districts) and public and private organizations in communities served by those LEAs, such as Head Start programs. Because they are complementary initiatives, the law specifically ties eligibility for Early Reading First funds to basic LEA eligibility under Reading First. A school district (and for Early Reading First, organizations located in the community served by that district) meets the eligibility criteria under the Reading First program if the district:

- is among the LEAs in the State with the highest numbers or percentages of students in kindergarten through grade 3 reading below grade level, based on the most currently available data (and a State may use the lowest grade for which they have that data, such as grade 4);

AND, the district meets one of these criteria:

- has jurisdiction over a geographic area that includes an area designated as an empowerment zone (EZ) or an enterprise community;

OR

- has jurisdiction over a significant number or percentage of schools that are identified for school improvement under section 1116(b) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA);

OR

- has the highest numbers or percentages of children who are counted under section 1124(c) of title I of the ESEA (the number of children counted for Title I Basic Grants to LEAs), in comparison to other LEAs in the state.

Section 1208(1) and 1221(b)(1), ESEA